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$1.50 January 26, 1990

COMMONWEAL

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY ISSUE

THE SACRAMENT OF CREATION
Toward an environmental theology
MICHAEL J. HIMES & KENNETH R. HIMES

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ABIGAIL McCARTHY: Bring back the orphanage • JOHN GARVEY: Bring back women deacons

EUGENE KENNEDY: Homosexual priests & nuns • LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM: Religious booknotes

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CORRESPONDENCE

From prison, with thanks

Muncy, Pa.

To the Editors: If I were to try to memorialize the content and impact of *Commonweal*'s journalism, I would find myself at a loss for adequate language. However, I can relate a true story. In the prison community in which I live there are periodic "room searches" where the prison authorities effect a type of housecleaning and disposal of unwanted matter. During my own room search last fall, I was forced to rid myself of endless copies of all manner of publications. The *New York Times Magazine* was disposed of, the *New American Review* was donated to the prison library, the *New York Times Book Review* was sent home, and the *London Review* was used to offset a giant puddle in the bathroom.

What remained in my room after the "invasion" were all my back copies of *Commonweal*. There are some things that are such a wellspring of thought and inspiration that they can not be given up.

There is still a year or two to go on my incredible journey through the "system," but the traveling was lifted to a much higher elevation because of your presence with me. Thank you. JUDITH P. WAGNER

Rome isn't the villain

Covington, La.

To the Editors: Sidney Callahan's article, "Getting Our Heads Together" [November 17], is a valuable and timely call for a renewal of Catholic intellectual life. Not only is the time ripe for educated Catholics, who are not good at such things, to talk to each other about the faith, but also there is, in my opinion, a special contribution the Catholic intellectual tradition can make what with the present demoralization of the social and psychological sciences, for which other scientists and laymen have no use, and whose practitioners cannot even name the subject matter of their sciences. Man as organism (Skinner)? Man as consciousness (Freud)?

I am obligated, however, to register my dismay at the obligatory hostility to "Rome." Translate: John Paul II is the villain. Here are examples of what has apparently come to be the new *Commonweal* line: "Roman abuses of authority," "chilly winter fogs flown in over the seas from Rome."

These issues could be debated, as indeed they often are, but here's how it appears to one novelist. If such attacks continue and are successful, the result will be pleasing mainly to the secular liberal establishment, who are in fact calling the shots, and destructive and divisive to the Catholic people. This novelist can only observe that if the magisterium and the sacramental orthodoxy of the church are compromised in the name of "creative pluralism" or suchlike, there may be a lot of hugging and kissing and good feeling going on, but there won't be any Catholic novelists around. For these odd fellows are turned on precisely by these claims of the church, breathtaking in their singularity and exclusivity, i.e., the magisterium and the Eucharist, and how these have endured with the people of God through these kinds of thicks and thins for two thousand years. And they will endure despite these chic brush-offs of "Rome."

Get rid of "Rome" and what will be left in the end is California.

WALKER PERCY

No outsider, he

New Haven, Conn.

To the Editors: Robert G. Hoyt may have been misled by my place of employment in criticizing the "outsider" perspective of my book, *The Catholic Counterculture in America, 1933-1962* [November 17]. I'll get over the unintended slight to my Newark and Brooklyn-Irish forebears (and present connections), but I must note the irony in Hoyt's concession of "insider" status to precisely those Catholics (particularly Day and Merton) who had least in common with the citizens of the immigrant church. One of the central themes of the work (ignored by Hoyt and untreated by Catholic historians) concerns just this interaction—and the deep if underlying tension—between noble converts (along with a few unbaptized fellow travelers with tastemaker's clout) and "ethnics" in the struggle to produce a workable American Catholic identity. I'll admit it's an understated theme but I was surprised by Hoyt's lack of interest in the homeboys I found most sympathetic, Irish Tom Dooley and Jean-Louis Lebris de Kerouac, Jack the beatific. JAMES TERENCE FISHER

More on environment

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: I very much enjoyed your sixty-fifth anniversary issue [November 17], especially the short essays on "Challenges Facing U.S. Catholics" in the next ten years. I was disappointed, however, that of those essays, the shortest was written by William Reilly, focusing on the challenge to protect "the natural systems that sustain life on this planet."

This was one of those rare instances in which environmental problems were mentioned in the Catholic press, and while I was pleased with Mr. Reilly's contribution,

(Continued on page 61)

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, Ohio 44691. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional offices.
Copyright © 1990 Commonweal Foundation.
Single copy, $1.50. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $32; Canada, $34; foreign, $37. Special two-year rate: U.S., $57; Canada, $61; foreign, $67. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

Illustrations: Cover design, Emil Antonucci; cover, pp. 42-47, Rita Corbin; pp. 50, 56, Paul Valerry; p. 62, Edd Uluschak, Rothco.

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Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published biweekly, except monthly Christmas, New Year's and July and August, by Commonweal Foundation, 15 Dutch St., New York, N.Y. 10038. Telephone: (212) 732-0800. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Ruth E. Taylor, 11 Graffam Rd., So. Portland, Me. 04106 (207) 799-4387, classified advertising correspondence to 15 Dutch St. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, N.Y. 10038.

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters should not exceed 250 words and are subject to editing for clarity and space limitations.

Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome but cannot be considered or returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Straight talk

The president won't be needing a speech writer, thank you. Not in Czechoslovakia, anyway. Vaclav Havel has been called to serve as interim president until elections this spring. A playwright, dissident, founding member of the opposition that peacefully toppled the Communist regime last month, and a prisoner for five years out of the past twenty, Havel speaks with the lucidity, candor, and authority that mark those willing to give up freedom for truth's sake, but not ever to sacrifice truth. Two recent striking examples: his speech last fall when presented the Peace Prize of the German Booksellers Association ("Words on Words," *New York Review of Books*, January 18, 1990); and his New Year's Day address to the Czechoslovak nation (*Washington Post*, January 3, 1990).

Havel's speech to the booksellers dealt with the mysterious power of the word, as both flaming torch and two-edged sword. Words have the power to liberate; when they degenerate, they have the power to enslave. "In the beginning of everything is the word. It is a miracle to which we owe the fact that we are human," declares Havel. "But at the same time, it is a pitfall and a test, a snare and a trial." In a discussion evocative of the late Andrei Sakharov, Havel warns that the term "*perestroika*" can be turned on its head and used to justify the silencing of others: "Isn't the word *perestroika* starting to resemble the word socialism, particularly on the odd occasion when it is discreetly hurled at people who, for so long, were unjustly lambasted with the word socialism?" As much could be said for our readiness to invoke the terms liberty and democracy while invading other countries. For Havel, the responsibility for words, "a task which is intrinsically ethical," belongs to each of us.

Havel is no less candid in his presidential speech. "It would be very unwise to think of the sad heritage of the last forty years only as something foreign," he tells the Czechoslovak peoples. "On the contrary, we must accept this heritage as something we have inflicted on ourselves. If we accept it in such a way, we shall come to understand it is up to all of us to do something about it." He laments the economic, political, and environmental pollution of the country; but even more insidious is the "spoiled moral environment. We have become morally ill because we are used to saying one thing and thinking another."

And yet, while in the grip of this moral malaise, the nation turned from it. How and why? Havel answers: first, because human beings are never merely the product of the world around them. We are capable of striving for something higher. Second, in Czechoslovakia, humanistic and democratic impulses were handed down quietly from one generation to the next; watered as if by underground springs, they at last came to flower.

The Czechoslovak revolution of 1989—typified by a sea of people chanting in

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unison and jingling their keys in Wenceslas Square—triumphed happily and nonviolently. What before had been spoken only in secret was thundered forth to the housetops; what before had been bound was unfettered. But it started with words. Such promise—and the hope it engenders—will only endure because of our honest tending to our words: that is, by our saying what we actually and honestly mean; and by our really doing what we say.

STRATEGY TIME

This is a pivotal moment for the American Catholic church's role in the national struggle of conscience about abortion. After a series of post-*Webster* setbacks stunned the prolife forces, the Catholic bishops stepped forward as champions to put a halt to the prochoice momentum, and promptly stumbled. Bishop Leo Maher of San Diego, claiming to be inspired by a resolution passed in November by the bishops' conference, barred a Catholic prochoice candidate for the California state legislature from Communion, thus, according to many observers, assuring her victory and the emergence of a prochoice majority in the legislature in place of a prolife one. Americans may be troubled about voting against fetuses, but they have no compunction about voting against religious authority-figures who seem to push themselves unwarrantedly into the political arena—and that goes for Catholics.

What kind of recovery will the bishops make? Bishops in Wisconsin, Montana, and Ohio have issued effective statements on abortion, some of them published in response to statements by local politicians, without applying ecclesiastical penalties or even hinting that they would. Yet it was not these statements but Bishop Maher's November decision that took the headlines. Consequently, attention is focused on the the eleven-member Bishops' Committee for Prolife Activities which has indicated its desire to develop some guidelines on the responsibilities of bishops and Catholic citizens and officials in the current public debate.

This is an unusual occasion. If such a document does materialize, it could frame the terms of the abortion issue, at least as far as Catholics are concerned, not only for the approaching 1990 election campaigns for Congress, state houses, and local offices, but for years to come. Whatever the bishops say will be heard because there are so many politically engaged forces that will want to make use of it to further their own causes.

If the bishops' real goal is to prevent abortions rather than to live up to some preconceived idea of their exercise of authority, then it seems obvious that a teaching rather than punishing strategy, however humbling it may be, is likely to have the greater long-term chance of success.

That formula still leaves a lot of complex questions to be addressed, on the connection between law and morality, between morality and religion, between personal beliefs and public policy, between the individual's right to follow one's conscience and the society's right to restrict or direct behavior. *Commonweal*, too, will attempt to address those questions editorially in issues to come.

In the meantime, it is not hard to understand the frustration of the bishops. The recent defections of heretofore prolife politicians, including many Catholics, are instances of political expediency. In their statements, they want to signal their moral rectitude and preserve at least an appearance of consistency ("I am personally opposed to abortion") while placating prochoice voters ("I respect a woman's right to choose"). Richard Cohen, the *Washington Post* columnist and self-identified "prochoicenik," eyed these recent converts with a certain skepticism: "For everything there is a season—even hypocrisy." Perhaps that is too strong a judgment. Perhaps what is operating (in harness with old-fashioned vote-counting) is a mental flabbiness that yields without resistance to the pervasive catchwords of American individualism. But frustration at this moral obtuseness should not goad the bishops, or any of us, into rash responses that will wilt in the glare of intellectual examination or boomerang in the heat of political contests.

AN EDITOR MOVES ON

After five-and-a-half years as an associate editor of *Commonweal*, Karen Sue Smith, a graduate of Notre Dame University and Harvard Divinity School, has been appointed the editor of the distinguished quarterly, *Church*. We shall miss her deft editing of manuscripts, her fruitful contacts with the magazine's authors, her perceptive and timely editorials, articles, and book reviews, as well as the impact of her original ideas. But our loss involves considerably more than that of an able editorial collaborator; her good spirits and warm friendship have often supplied a bracing tonic for us to start the day. We shall indeed miss her stimulating presence. Happily, in her new post she will be nearby, keeping in touch with her former colleagues. Our congratulations and best wishes to *Church* and to Karen as she moves on to a new stage in her editorial career.

REPORT FROM BEIT SAHOUR

TAX STRIKE FOR JUSTICE
BUILDING AUTONOMY

All was not calm and bright in the shepherds' fields of Bethlehem this Christmas. The fields surround Beit Sahour, a Palestinian town of twelve thousand just east of Bethlehem. This Christmas, Beit Sahour and Bethlehem were in the eye of the *intifada*. About 80 percent of the inhabitants of Beit Sahour are Christian, mainly Greek

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Orthodox and Latin (Roman) Catholic. It is a relatively prosperous town with many small businesses and cottage industries; some of the olive wood manger sets and mother-of-pearl crosses sold in the tourist shops of Bethlehem are made by the craftsmen of Beit Sahour.

The town has been relatively peaceful during the *intifada,* though two of its young people have been killed by Israeli soldiers. A continuing dialogue between the Palestinians of Beit Sahour and Jewish peace activists attempts to bridge the chasm that separates their people.

What makes Beit Sahour distinctive is the tax revolt its citizens have undertaken as an act of civil disobedience in protest of the Israeli occupation. Palestinians have been reluctant taxpayers throughout the years of occupation. In 1989 what was previously a matter of sporadic individual noncompliance became a concerted community effort in Beit Sahour. Two slogans express the spirit and rationale of the tax revolt: "no taxation without representation" and "no taxation without services."

The country of Israel is a democracy, but democracy stops at the "Green Line" separating Israel from the occupied territories, which are under the rule of the Israeli army. The military administration of the occupied territories is supported by taxes paid by Palestinians, chiefly an income tax paid by individuals and a value added tax paid by businesses. The people of Beit Sahour have refused to pay these taxes—refusing, in effect, to finance their own occupation. But their fundamental challenge is to the occupation itself: Palestinians want their own democratically elected government. There have been no municipal elections since 1976 and many of the officials elected then have been removed from office or deported. Nor is there an independent judiciary; justice is in the hands of the Israeli military.

Palestinians charge that the occupation has been highly profitable for Israel, with millions of dollars more collected annually in taxes than are expended in services. The number of hospital beds has declined during the twenty-two years of occupation, even as the population has greatly increased. Schools are grossly inadequate, with overcrowded classrooms. Palestinians do not feel they receive services commensurate with the taxes they pay. They say that their taxes have gone to build new prisons in which they are made prisoners. An Israeli military spokesman denied that the occupation turns a profit for Israel, claiming that taxes collected and expenditures made were not diverted to Israel but kept in a revolving account.

There is another important economic factor: Israel runs a sizable trade surplus with the West Bank and Gaza. There are limits and regulations on what Palestinians are able to import and export. Israel protects its own agriculture from Palestinian competition, while making the occupied territories something of a captive market for its products. Palestinians are refused permits to dig new wells for crop irrigation while Jewish settlers in the West Bank are granted permits or receive water from the national water system at reduced rates. Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem, one of the few Palestinian mayors remaining in office, reported that Palestinians pay $1.00 per cubic meter of water while Jewish settlers pay $.10 per cubic meter for irrigation and $.15 for household use.

Neither under Jordanian nor Israeli rule has the West Bank been able to develop an industrial base. During its rule from 1948 to 1967 Jordan wanted Palestinian money invested east of the Jordan River. Israeli occupation since 1967 has not been any more conducive to the West Bank developing its own economy.

The main export of the West Bank and Gaza seems to be cheap day labor. Palestinians travel into Israel as low-paid manual laborers in agriculture and construction, returning home each night because they are forbidden to remain without a special permit. Before the *intifada*, over 100,000 Palestinians crossed the "Green Line" each day. It is difficult to know how consciously Israel hampered agricultural and economic development in the occupied territories in order to insure economic dependence and a pool of cheap labor, but that is the apparent result after twenty-two years of occupation.

This perceived economic exploitation forms a part of the background of the *intifada* and the tax revolt of Beit Sahour. Nonpayment of taxes is a way of protesting the economic consequences of occupation. So too is the tactic employed by the leaders of the *intifada* in Gaza: to destroy the special identity cards required for day laborers to enter into Israel. So too is the Palestinian boycott of goods made in Israel—a boycott that has resulted in a drastic reduction of exports from Israel to the occupied territories. So too is planting one's own vegetable garden in order to become more self-sufficient.

For its part, Israel seems to have recognized that the chief threat posed by the *intifada* lies not in stone throwing and tire burning, but in the development of an autonomous Palestinian economic and social fabric. Some of the people of Beit Sahour planted gardens in 1988 with the idea of creating a "home economy." These gardens were found threatening by the military authorities: they closed down a small business which sold seedlings and put an agricultural expert in six months' "administrative detention" in what has been called "the battle of the vegetables."

Beit Sahour's tax strike took on a life of its own in the summer of 1989 and the Israeli military responded with harsh measures. Soldiers went from house to house to seize the property of those who had not paid their taxes. Any possessions were fair game: furniture, automobiles, a craftman's tools, even a clothes washer emptied out and taken in midcycle. A pharmacist saw his stock of medicine hauled away; a woodworking shop's equipment was confiscated. There are reports of houses and workshops being stripped down to the bare walls.

It is difficult to put a value on the confiscated property; estimates range from $1.5 to $5 million. A military spokesman denied that any property was seized in excess of the amount of taxes owed, but allowed that second-hand goods would have limited value when sold at auction—implying that a great deal was seized to assure that taxes were covered. Those in Beit Sahour say that the property taken bore no relation to the taxes owed.

The intent of Israel seems to go beyond merely collecting taxes due and to carrying out a determined effort to suppress any organized dissent to the occupation, however nonviolently

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may be carried out. Israeli Defense Minister Yitzak Rabin reportedly told a Knesset committee that he was resolved "to teach a lesson" to the residents of Beit Sahour and that the civil disobedience campaign could not be allowed to succeed.

Dusk-to-dawn curfews were imposed on Beit Sahour, confining people to their houses. Telephone service was cut off. Bank accounts of tax protesters were frozen. Some were arrested with the threat of being held until their taxes were paid; sometimes their relatives were summoned to appear before authorities. From September 22 to October 31 the town was declared a "closed military zone," and no nonresident was permitted to enter. This kept the Israeli and foreign press from witnessing the seizure of goods, and the harassment which allegedly accompanied it.

Since no one could enter Beit Sahour, representatives of Beit Sahour scheduled a press conference on October 3 in a Jerusalem hotel. The military responded by declaring the hotel and its adjoining streets another "closed military zone" and barricading it against journalists. On October 6, the consuls of Great Britain, France, Italy, Greece, Belgium, Spain, and Sweden attempted to visit Beit Sahour on a fact-finding mission and were turned back at a military roadblock. The U.S. consul general in Jerusalem canceled a scheduled visit on October 11 after being told he would not be allowed to enter.

The blockade of Beit Sahour prevented food supplies from reaching the village. An army leaflet signed by the military commander warned that the people of Beit Sahour "will go hungry" if they do not end their tax revolt. On October 27, the Latin (Roman Catholic), Greek Orthodox, and Armenian patriarchs of Jerusalem, accompanied by their bishops, attempted to bring three trucks of food into Beit Sahour. Their convoy was turned back. Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah denounced the closure of the village and confiscation of property: "What is going on in Beit Sahour is unjust—it is not acceptable to any churchman or any spiritual man who has a human conscience."

The siege of Beit Sahour was lifted on October 31, but reimposed again on November 2. Since then the Israeli military has opened and closed the town on almost a day-by-day basis. Some headlines in the Israeli press would lead one to believe that the matter is settled and everything has returned to normal, but the tax raids continue and the conflict is far from over. Many in Beit Sahour have become impoverished because of their stand, but they show little sign of giving in. Rather, they seem firmly resolved to continue their civil disobedience until the occupation ends. Their tax revolt has in fact spread to Bethlehem, resulting in similar confiscations of property.

Christmas was therefore a bit somber this year in the shepherds' fields. The Christians of Beit Sahour and Bethlehem celebrated the birth of the Prince of Peace into a land which knows little peace. They prayed for justice, and prayed as well that the rest of the world will not ignore them in their struggle.

GEORGE MARTIN & JAMES MANNEY

George Martin, editor of God's Word Today, *and James Manney, editor of* New Covenant, *recently visited Jordan, Israel, and the occupied territories on a fact-finding trip sponsored by Mercy Corps International.*

OF SEVERAL MINDS Abigail McCarthy

ORPHANS NEED HOMES

BRING BACK THE ORPHANAGE

Pia McKay teaches at a community college and volunteers in her spare time to help with the "boarder babies" at the city hospital here in Washington. Most of the "boarder babies" have been abandoned by drug-addicted mothers, too addled and irresponsible to make provision for their babies or to relinquish them to those who can. Pia McKay, herself an orphan, ponders their future.

"Will they be parked, as I was, like some inanimate, unfeeling thing in one foster home after the other?" she asks. "Will they shift from school to school, constantly losing friends until they lose the knack of friendship?"

What to do with these babies is a problem for the hospital and the city. After complicated, long-drawn-out legal proceedings some of them may eventually be transferred to foster homes. Pia McKay wonders about that solution: "My own experience teaches me that, by design, a foster home is a truck-stop existence. In theory, foster care sounds sensible, but I have never heard a foster child speak well of it."

The alternative to the foster home, if adoption is not feasible, is a return to the orphanage. The rejection of that institution as a solution to the problem of children was based on an idealistic goal of providing a place in a stable family for each and every child—a goal which has proved impossible to attain. The history of the disappearance of Home after Home (as the orphanage was often euphemistically called) is murky. When I first came to Washington, volunteer effort was directed to Junior Village, a city facility for children. The care given at Junior Village, it is true, was probably indifferent at best and as the years went by the institution lost the support of the community. Indeed, one well-intentioned group, For the Love of Children, had as its avowed aim the emptying of Junior Village.

Some orphanages were huge cold institutions, improperly staffed by inadequate personnel. But even those were hardly the Dickensian horrors of our imagination. Many orphanages were small and caring places. Their graduates often speak well of them.

In 1988, for example, those who had lived in the German Orphan Home, an orphanage formerly in southeast Washington, held a reunion. One hundred and thirty former residents came from as far as California and Florida. They had sor-

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rowed at being parted from their parents, but their memories of the Home seem to have been positive ones. "It was an exciting time for us," said one. "We were living in this grand house with other orphans—and to us, it was better than being left on the street as some others were." "We had discipline, but it was good discipline," recalled Elizabeth Harich Keiser. "We were raised right, with good manners. We were happy there."

That orphan home was supported by the congregation of only one church—the Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Church of Washington, whose members wanted to give shelter, food, and clothing to children of all nationalities. The home was closed in 1979 because of the move to foster care or adoption.

Two years ago the alumni of St. Joseph's Orphanage, the orphanage in my small home town, also now closed, held a reunion. The comments of former residents, when interviewed by the *Wabasha County Herald-Standard*, were strikingly similar to those of orphans who had lived in the German Home. They remembered the companionship, the security, the shared experiences. They conceded that the discipline was strict—the sponsors of St. Joseph's were nuns, German-born or first generation German-Americans—but they felt cared for.

The children of Wabasha thought of the orphanage as a vague threat in the years of the Depression. Almost anyone who lost one parent or the other, or whose family was in straitened circumstances, might end up there. But we also knew that those who lived there were in far better circumstances than our classmates who had been "farmed out" to rural families by that faceless, threatening entity—the County.

As I look back now, I remember good things about the orphanage. It was situated on a hill overlooking the river and surrounded by wooded pastures and a few fields which the sisters used to provide good, plenteous food for their charges. I can still see the nuns, their habits kilted up, working in the long rows of vegetables—admittedly accompanied by the older and possibly reluctant orphans—but still selfless in their labor.

I remember them, too, in the pitiless heat of Mississippi Valley summers escorting groups to the sand bars along the rivers and sitting there in their folds of wool serge under black umbrellas while the orphans splashed and swam. I remember, too, the happy din in the playrooms when we visited our orphan friends on Sunday afternoons.

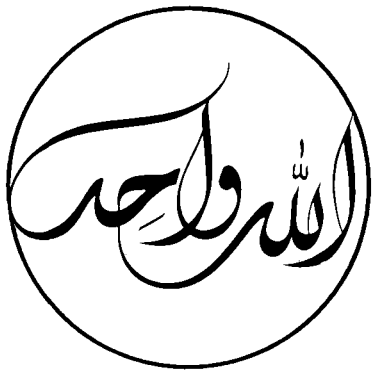
The children "farmed out" were isolated and alone. Perhaps a county worker checked on their well-being from time to time. I only knew that one of my fourth-grade classmates so placed died because of the neglect of an infection. The children at St. Joseph's had the care of the sister nurses in the hospital adjacent to their home.

The community was involved with the orphanage. Every week women of the town like my grandmother and aunts went there to sew for the orphans. (Never mind that they waged a ceaseless, polite struggle with the nuns who tended to prefer over-modest covering and long-wearing serviceability to attractiveness in girls' clothing). Playground equipment was donated by businessmen and church groups. As the Depression eased and times were less bleak, townspeople provided outings and Christmas parties.

St. Joseph's had its own elementary school but the orphans went to our high school. The administrators adopted school uniforms so that they would not feel out of place. We developed friendships—rather tentative ones, to be sure, because teenagers, then as now, are uneasy with differences.

All over America there are large and empty convents, unused school buildings, over-sized and under-used rectories. If one Lutheran congregation could support a Home for over a hundred years, cannot coalitions of affluent churches do so now? The time is short, the need is urgent. A year or two of neglect in early childhood can mark for life. Little children need help now. As Pia McKay notes, "Some of them have never been outdoors, never seen the sky. They have known no mother.... With their tiny hands they reach out—often only to meet the empty air. They get bored, frustrated, and, cruelest of all, lonely." She quotes Elizabeth O'Connor's book, *Our Many Selves*: "When the heavens are deaf to the cries of children, man asks an age old question, 'Does God Live?'" □

THE WORLD OF ISLAM



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WOMEN'S ORDINATION

ANOTHER GO AT THE ARGUMENTS

The issue of the ordination of women is one which will not go away, and shouldn't. I know from previous experience that writing about it can be perilous (or, anyway, as perilous as anything in a writer's life can be, in a profession which has paper cuts as its most dire hazard). The reason the issue shouldn't go away is that it raises important questions not only about the most obvious topic—the place of women in the church—but also about what we mean by ordination in the first place; and it raises essential questions about the symbolic nature of gender.

When I wrote about this once before I received two sorts of letter in response. One sort called me hopelessly male chauvinist and tradition-bound; another sort wondered why I didn't call down fire on those who advance the cause of women's ordination, and condemn the idea unequivocally. Since then I've done more reading on the subject and have come to believe that most people on both sides have closed their minds on the subject and fail to hear the important questions the other side raises.

What I want to do here is indicate some questions that ought to be considered, more than they have been, by people on both sides of the issue.

Those who oppose the ordination of women make some impressive arguments. Jesus did not choose women as the apostles of his church, though women were among his most important first followers and had a prominent role—unusual, given the surrounding cultures—in the early church. Considering the fact that whatever the status of women in the church (and there is some impressive historical evidence that it was once better than it is at present), there is no real evidence that women were ever ordained to the sacramental priesthood. A couple of thousand years' worth of tradition should not be thrown over lightly, in the light of that fact. In addition, to the extent that the priest in some sense takes the place of Jesus within a liturgical service, and to the extent that such ideas as "God the Father and God the Son" are not merely patriarchal reflexes but important revealed symbols, a reasonable argument can be made for a male priesthood.

There are, however, some very good arguments against this point of view. Jesus not only chose no women as his apostles; he chose no gentiles. There is not a lot of clarity about the role played by the first eucharistic ministers, or even the content of the first eucharistic services. (The very early *Didache*, for example, omits the words of Jesus at the last supper in its description of the Eucharist.) The offices of bishop and deacon preceded the institution of the priesthood, and we know that women were deacons in the early church. Their function was not eucharistic, but their disappearance as an order within the church is, to say the least, interesting.

To the extent that such symbols as God the Father and God the Son are symbolically important, the question must still be asked: why can't a woman represent Jesus (if that indeed is what a priest does, which is itself an important question)? Does the representation of Jesus become important primarily because of his maleness? Even if this were the case, men played women in the theater during Shakespeare's day. The roles were symbolically feminine. To say that a woman cannot symbolically represent a man could be to reduce maleness to a merely genital level. Men are called on, rightly, to exhibit aspects of the personality that have traditionally been considered feminine (for example, men are asked to be nurturing, caring, tender, and so forth), and we allegedly admire women for traits that are traditionally considered masculine, like physical courage, or emotional detachment in critical situations. (I say "allegedly," because I have worked with and for women who are in fact disliked for exhibiting qualities that would be considered admirable in a man.) Why can't a woman fulfill a priestly role? It is, after all, a *role*—no one claims that a priest is really inherently better than the people he ministers to, though he is expected not to be worse, an expectation that is too frequently frustrated. Monasticism is a way of life, but the priesthood is a limited function—essential, but limited to the specific things the priest is made competent for by ordination.

But beyond this level is the question of whether it is the maleness of Jesus that connects him to God the Father. That question in itself matters deeply. Certainly when Jesus speaks of longing to gather the children of Israel to himself like a mother hen he moves away from images of divine masculinity to something very feminine.

It seems to me that these are a few of the questions that have yet to be answered well by opponents of women's ordination. But there are some equally important questions and considerations that have been dealt with too easily and lightly by proponents.

One of these is the issue of power. When I wrote about the issue last, I argued that to the extent ordination has anything to do with status or power there is a good reason for any Christian to avoid it. A woman who is a strong advocate of women in the priesthood told me, "Since it *does* have to do with power and status, whether it should or not, let's open it to women and maybe that will begin to change things." My response is that unless you begin to accept the notion of women as essentially better than men, essentially different in their ways of responding to power, this does not seem to be an especially strong point. I think Golda Meir, Indira Gandhi, and Margaret Thatcher are sufficient arguments against essential differences in the way women use power, but apart from this there is the most basic problem: the clericalism that remains a major Christian problem, and sees the laity as, somehow, clients of the clergy. Again, the lay origins of monasticism—which was, among other things, the way in which the church avoided falling completely into its era's equivalent of secularism, once

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Christianity became a legal and established institution—are very much to the point, and the monastic life is not closed to women. If the monastic spirit is not truly at the center of the church, that is the church's sorrow.

Another is the question of symbolism. If Jesus was only a male sadly influenced by the Jewish religion and its patriarchal traditions, and if the idea of God the Father is merely a reflection of patriarchy's hold on the limited imaginations of a few thousand years' worth of worshipers, then a couple of important questions follow: who would want to be a member of a church which depended on such limited resources? If tradition can be so tragically limited in its origins, why be a Christian, a Jew, or a Muslim? The tradition may be more than its origins, but it cannot and should not be separate from what it has been, nor should what it has been be seen entirely in terms of more recent secular understandings.

How do you explain the obvious radical departures Jesus made from what preceded him, by speaking to women as directly as he did (the woman at the well, for example, something apparently a potential source of scandal), and there were, Paul's letters make clear, a number of women prominent in the early church. For that matter, what about the departure Abraham makes from what preceded him, if it is correct that the story of Abraham and Isaac was in part a rejection of human sacrifice, which may have been acceptable within the tribe at an earlier period? If traditions are so thoroughly limiting, how could these departures happen? One way of explaining might be to say that changes do in fact come, and the call for women's ordination could be a case in point, one to which Jesus, in our time, might have responded.

And he may have. I don't know. Neither, really, does anyone. However, traditional Christianity, until the division between East and West and later the Reformation, did believe that the Christian tradition was guided by the Holy Spirit. The development of tradition was not seen merely as a process of cultural accretion, but was guided by the continuing life of the Spirit in the church. If the culture we live in believes it can see the rest of history as if from a height, with a clarity unknown to humanity until now, a traditional religion can at least accept the value of some of the criticism without succumbing to the hubris; it can say, "Yes, but...." It should, to say the very least, be tentative about drastic change.

So far this looks like an argument against the ordination of women. But what opponents of women in the priesthood have not looked at sufficiently is the demonstrable fact that at some point women began to lose important symbolic positions within the church. There was in both the Eastern and Western churches the order of women deacons. This is now a part of Anglican tradition, which remains divided on the question of the ordination of women; but it is not now a part of Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy. Why not? When did women begin to lose a role which the church once felt was appropriate, and for what reasons? I can see how a traditionalist could argue that because women had not been ordained priests in the whole of the tradition, whatever other changes may have happened within it, they should not be ordained now. I can see how a traditionalist could disagree with the choice of some Anglican churches to ordain women as priests and bishops on the strength of a majority vote. Both of these objections can be defended.

But what argument could possibly be offered against women deacons? A number of Orthodox have argued that this ought to be taken up at the pan-Orthodox synod we have been talking about for decades, and it should. Rome (with the efficient top-down style that has been both an ecumenical and doctrinal problem and an administrative strength) could move toward the change much sooner. It would at least shift the whole argument into the place where it belongs: the tradition within which women and men have always been baptized into the fullness of Christ's life, within which some of them have been set apart and consecrated for specific roles, within which men have been exclusively ordained to the priesthood, for reasons which should be defended better than they have been, if they have the strength their advocates maintain they do, and within which women once had a richer symbolic place than they do at present, for reasons no one can defend very well. □

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THE SACRAMENT OF CREATION

TOWARD AN ENVIRONMENTAL THEOLOGY

MICHAEL J. HIMES &
KENNETH R. HIMES

Something is in the air. Or is it in the water? A sense of ecological crisis looms over our planet. Interest in the environment is spreading. In Washington, Congress has been at odds with the White House over how to make the next clean air legislation tougher. And, lo and behold, officials in Los Angeles have gotten so serious about air quality they have proposed a plan for cutting down pollution that could make carpooling mandatory.

When the leaders of the seven industrialized nations met in Paris in the summer of 1989, their final communiqué gave evidence of just how "mainstream" environmentalism has become. That the president of the United States supports such ecological high-mindedness should come as no surprise. Recall the last presidential campaign when Messrs. Bush and Dukakis skirmished over who deserved to be called the environmental candidate.

For many, of course the environment has never not been an issue. Fetid garbage dumps, closed beaches, air you can see as well as breathe, the extinction of whole species—the causes for concern have long been with us. More recently interest has arisen in developing a religious response to the ecological crisis. Some have found the resources for such a theology and spirituality in Eastern thought and practice. Others, like Joseph Sittler and Ian Barbour, seek out elements of the Christian tradition for the development of a "creation-centered" perspective.

At the same time a number of critics (Arnold Toynbee, Lynn White) have argued that the Christian tradition is suspect on the matter of the environment. They argue that Judaism and Christianity have fed an anthropocentrism which, intentionally or not, demeans the rest of creation as it exalts those who are a "little less than the angels" (Psalm 8:5). Certainly Hebraic monotheism declared that all others but Yahweh were "no-gods." Included among those thus denied divine status were the deities of Greek and Roman mythology who protected streams, mountains, and forests. It is possible to see in this demythologizing a loss of reverence for nature. Christianity's contribution to the problem—its celebration of the Incarnation—has promoted the centrality of humanity in the plan of creation and redemption and accorded secondary status to the rest of creation.

With a bit of poetic license and some ingenuity a few individuals (Thomas Berry, Matthew Fox) have sought to re-present the tradition and demonstrate a more sensible Christian attitude toward the created order. Some of this work has borne fruit, awakening among believers an interest in the environment and providing a degree of religious seriousness for addressing an issue that is more important and complex than the faddishness and trivialization which mass media politics inevitably encourages.

Despite these efforts, it is lamentable but true that the question still can fairly be asked, "What does Christianity have to say

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to the contemporary ecological movement?" That it has something to say is important to assert, but what it has to say is not primarily advice on public policy or clear moral judgments for settling disputes about economic growth versus ecological protection. In this regard, the Christian tradition is, in the words of Richard McCormick, "more a value raiser than a problem solver."

The values that Christianity points to in the cluster of issues raised by the environmental crisis is humankind's essential relatedness to nature, an understanding of the created order that is precisely what is at stake here. Too often the discussion over the ecosystem turns on arguments from self-interest, even if enlightened self-interest, a stance that we believe is fundamentally flawed.

Treating the environmental issue as primarily a calculation of long-term versus short-term interests maintains an attitude of instrumental rationality that is essentially part of the problem. The Jewish and Christian understanding of creation, at least in one of its strands, is profoundly insightful and potentially transformative of modern ways of addressing the crisis of creation.

The needed transformation lies at the level of our deep convictions, our world view. The relational dimension of the Jewish-Christian heritage must replace the atomized individualism of our current outlook. The mentality of consumerism, the myth of progress, and our technological mind-set are all problematic in regard to the environment; they are also symptomatic. Each is the distortion of a human good, a distortion rising from the nonrelational anthropology of our age. If our environmental sensitivity is to change, the transformation must take place at the root of the problem. But that transformation is more convoluted than might first appear.

The human abuse of nonhuman nature has spurred a harsh reaction by defenders of the environment, who exhibit a brand of ecological activism, and environmental romanticism, that borders on the antihuman. Nature is idealized. The achievements of human civilization are disparaged. The environmental romantic, however, mirrors the fundamental outlook of the technocrats. Both see humanity at odds with nature. In one case this leads to calls for more effective ways of manipulating, subduing, and dominating nature. In the other, there is opposition to technology, economic growth, and development efforts. In both cases humanity is set in opposition to the rest of creation. Either alternative is unacceptable from a relational world view. To separate nature from human culture is environmental romanticism. To consider human culture apart from the nonhuman is to invite the impoverishment of the first and the devastation of the second.

The Jewish and Christian traditions put before us a world view in which humanity is not against nature but a part of it. Neither element is rightly viewed in isolation. The exploration of this relational anthropology is the basic contribution theologians can make to the environmental movement. We can examine the traditions to see which developments have been distortions, which trajectories misguided, which insights forgotten. The constructive task is to illustrate how the resources of the Jewish and Christian heritage can be used in promoting ecological wisdom.

Lessons of Genesis

Like every myth of origin, the two Genesis stories of the beginning of all things (Genesis 1:1-2:4a and 2:4b-25) have been used to explain and justify the ways human beings relate to one another and to the nonhuman world. As narratives of how things came to be and depictions of how things were and presumably ought to be, these creation stories have been elaborated into cosmologies and theories of the soul and twisted into ideological support for male-dominance and industrial exploitation.

The first of the two stories has been the basis of both the overlordship and stewardship images for the role of humanity in the natural world. "Let us make the human being in our image and likeness....God blessed them, saying to them, 'Be fertile and increase; fill the whole earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and all the living things that move on the earth'" (Gen. 1:26 and 28). Part of the human being's likeness to God is the exercise of dominion over the rest of creation. The twin images of being given dominion and being commanded to subdue the earth and all the creatures which fill it are closely connected with sovereignty. God's sovereignty is asserted often in the Hebrew Scriptures. Here the image and likeness of God, the human being, is entrusted with sovereignty. From the perspective of the first creation myth in Genesis, without such dominion and power over the rest of creation, the human being would not be "like God."

But there is a contrasting theme in this story. "And so God created the human being in God's image; in the divine image did God create the human being, male and female did he create them" (Gen. 1:27). How is it that being created in the image of God results in the differentiation of male and female? Clearly the myth does not wish to attribute gender to God, much less dual bisexuality. The point is not that God is male or female or male and female, but that God is relational. The only God that the Hebrew tradition knows is the God who is about the business of creating; that is, the Hebrew Scriptures contain nothing about God *in se*, God considered apart from the creating God. Even in one of its creation myths, the Hebrew tradition envisions God as the God of the covenant, God in relationship. To be the image of this God, the human being must be relational. Humanity is sexed in order that human beings may be driven into relationship one with another.

This is a central theme of the second of Genesis's creation myths (2:4b-25). The dominion motive is depicted in the first human being naming all the animals that God has made and led before him "to see what he would call them" (Gen. 2:19). All other creatures will be what the human being says they are—certainly an extraordinary statement of the power over creation given by God to humanity. But the context of this conferral is the human hunger for companionship. In the first of the creation myths, the first divine judgment on humanity is that it is "very good" (Gen. 1:31). That judgment is made on humanity differentiated into male and female, relational being. The first judgment

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of God regarding human beings in the second myth makes this even more explicit. Having fashioned the human being from the clods of the earth and breathed the divine breath into him, God announces that "it is not good for the human being to be alone" (Gen. 2:18). Again there is the insistence that human beings are meant to be in relationship to one another. Thus, in this second creation story, companionship is the explicit ground given for the creation of the two sexes. But it is important to note not only human beings are intended for relationship to one another. This is also the reason for the creation of "the various wild beasts and birds of the air" (Gen. 2:19). The natural world is not merely intended for subjugation by human beings but for companionship.

Dominion over the earth and all that it contains, the command "to fill the whole earth and subdue it"—certainly this conveys power. Such a claim to power by human beings over all nonhuman creation contains the possibility, all too often realized, of domination and exploitation of the earth. Clearly the claim to power must be balanced by the call to responsibility, the traditional appeal to stewardship. The relationship between humanity and the rest of creation has often been cast in the Jewish and Christian traditions as that of a caretaker, one charged by God with the maintenance of the earth. The nonhuman world has been given to human beings for our good, to be used responsibly for our self-development, to answer to our purposes and thus to fulfill God's purpose in creating it. To be sure, this stewardship image prohibited wanton wastefulness, the mere exploitation of nature by humankind. The world is presented as a garden given into our care to be tended and nurtured. But undeniably the role of stewardship carries the implication that nonhuman creation is to be used.

The theme of companionship, the relationship which exists not only between human persons but between humans and nonhumans, has been largely submerged in the stewardship theme. We need to recover it. Companionship implies mutuality. It excludes the reduction of either side of the relationship to a tool of the other's purposes. Martin Buber, so deeply rooted in the biblical tradition, explored the meaning of companionship under the rubric "I–Thou." The contrasting possibility is "I–It." The reduction of "thou" to "it" results from making the other into an extension of oneself. The other becomes *mine*—*my* husband, *my* wife, *my* parent, *my* friend, *my* student, *my* boss. "It" can be manipulated in order to fulfill the task which I set, for "it" belongs to me. "It" has no intrinsic value, only the instrumental value that I assign it. The other as "thou" cannot be possessed, can never become *my* "thou." When recognized and respected as "thou," the other is seen to be of inherent value, to be an end and not a means to an end.

As a human being can be reduced to an "it," so a nonhuman being can become "thou," in Buber's terms. "It" can be a possession but not a companion. "Thou" is always a companion. But in what sense, other than the mythology of the second creation story in Genesis, can one speak of the nonhuman world as companion to human beings? At a time of global ecological crisis, we certainly do not need a revival of the nineteenth–century Romantic poets' personification of Nature. Indeed, such personification is the very reverse of what Buber meant by treating the nonhuman world as "thou," for instead of allowing the other to be what the other is, personification insists that the other must be what I am if I am to enter into any relationship with it. Such personification is another, more subtle way of reducing the nonhuman other to "it."

Augustine & Francis

The Catholic tradition offers two important symbols that deserve to be explored as ways of re-appropriating the biblical theme of companionship in creation: poverty and sacramentality.

In Book 9 of his *Confessions*, Augustine recounts an incident that took place shortly before the death of his mother, Monica, as they stayed at Ostia on their way home to North Africa after his baptism in Milan. Seated at a window overlooking the garden of their rented house, they speculated on the life of the saints in glory. As Augustine describes their experience, they entered into a rapturous ecstasy in which they had a foretaste of that life. Passing through all the spheres of the sun, moon, planets, and stars of their Ptolemaic universe, they came to the outermost limit of their own minds and transcended even that. All the heavenly spheres ceased their music, Augustine writes. Everything that exists by passing away, that is, all creatures, since the mark of creatureliness is temporality, fell silent after singing the song which they constantly sing: "We did not make ourselves, but were made by God who is forever" (Bk. 9:10, 25).

Eight centuries later, Francis of Assisi grasped the two central elements of this Augustinian song of all creation. As with so many charismatic men and women, the historic Francis has been lost in popular mythology. But two themes of the Franciscan legend seem rooted in Francis himself: poverty and the unity

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of all creatures. The singer of the Canticle of the Sun, who recognized the sun and moon, earth and air, fire and water, his own body, all animals and plants, and death itself as brothers and sisters, also entered into a mystical marriage with Lady Poverty. This Franciscan emphasis, which finds its legendary expression in Francis's preaching to the birds and the wolf of Gubbio, is grounded in one insight: all creatures are united in the depths of their being by the fact of being creatures.

The discovery of one's finiteness is the recognition of one's poverty. When one grasps the "iffiness" of one's existence, the shocking fact that the source and foundation of one's being is not in oneself, then one knows oneself as truly poor. To be poor in this fundamental sense is a definition, not a description. True poverty, the poverty of the spirit, is the realization that there is no intrinsic reason for one's being at all. In this fundamental poverty of creatureliness, there is equality. The human person has no more claim to intrinsic being than a plant or animal, a star or a stone. This is not in any way to deny the unique role which the human person plays in the divine economy. Indeed, in light of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, that role is one of extraordinary dignity. But the role given to humanity is as sovereignly the gift of God as is the role of every other creature. The human person is the point in creation to which the fullness of the self-gift of God can be given. But the human person has been *created* as such.

The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* is not a claim about *how* the universe came into being, but *why*. It is the Christian response to the question that Martin Heidegger held was the beginning of all metaphysics: why is there being rather than nothing? If the question seeks a reason within being itself, it is doomed to remain unanswered. The doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* insists on the fundamental poverty of the universe: the universe has no intrinsic ground for existence. When all else has been said, when the heavenly spheres fall silent, Augustine knew, the great truth that must be proclaimed is that we—all of us individually and together—did not make ourselves. And so Francis saw that it was neither an act of human self-denigration nor an effusion of poetic personification to address the sun and the moon, the fire and the earth, and all animate and inanimate creatures as his brothers and sisters; it was the simple truth.

The only reason for anything to exist is the free *agape* of God. The universe exists because God loves it and wills to give God's self to it. Utterly dependent, creation is divinely gifted. Thus, to see creation as a whole or any creature in particular as what it is, namely, totally dependent on the gracious will of God, is to see revealed the grace which is its foundation in being. Since everything that is exists because of the free act of God—the overflowing *agape* that is the source of all being—then everything is a sacrament of the goodness and creative power of God.

The themes of creation and poverty intersect in the Catholic vision of sacramentality. A sacrament is not a stand-in for something else, a visible sign for some other invisible reality. The essence of a sacrament is the capacity to reveal grace, the agapic self-gift of God, by being what it is. By being thoroughly itself, a sacrament bodies forth the absolute self-donative love of God that undergirds both it and the entirety of creation. The Catholic community has recognized seven particular events as being revelatory of grace. But every creature, human and non-human, animate and inanimate, can be a sacrament. The more richly developed our sacramental vision, the more sacraments crowd in upon us. Francis of Assisi's interweaving of poverty with the brotherhood and sisterhood of all creatures is profoundly Catholic because it is profoundly sacramental.

This sacramental vision is by no means limited to the Roman Catholic church. When Jonathan Edwards described the marks of true conversion in his great *Treatise on Religious Affections*, he gave as the first mark of such affections that they "do arise from those influences and operations on the heart which are *spiritual*, *supernatural*, and *divine*." In explanation of this first mark of the converted, Edwards wrote that "in those gracious affections and exercises which are wrought in the minds of the saints, through the saving influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward perception or sensation of their minds, entirely different in its nature and kind, from anything that ever their minds were the subjects of before they were sanctified." The saints, to use Edwards's term, see reality differently from the unconverted. They do not see things that others do not see; rather, they see what everyone else sees but in a different way. They see everything in its relation to God: they see it as creature. Edwards's "new inward perception or sensation" is the ability to hear the song of all creation that Augustine and Monica heard, to see the community of all creatures as creatures that Francis saw. At the risk of "catholicizing" the great eighteenth–century Calvinist, one way of describing this "new inward perception" of the Edwardsean saint is the capacity for sacramental vision.

The cultivation of sacramental vision is the richest way of recovering the companionship motif of the Genesis stories that the Christian tradition has to offer in the current global ecological crisis. The discovery that every creature, including oneself, is a sacrament of the love of God that causes all things to be provides

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the deepest foundation for reverencing creation. The recognition of the other as a creature and, therefore, that which exists because it is loved by God cannot occur where the other is regarded as "it." By its nature a sacrament requires that it be appreciated for what it is and not as a tool to an end; in Buber's terms, a sacrament is always "thou." Since every creature can and should be a sacrament, so every creature can and should be "thou," a companion. But this sacramental vision demands unflinching recognition of the poverty of one's own being—for many too terrible to be true—and joyful acceptance of the absolute *agape* that supports one's own being—for many too good to be true. This requires the expansion of the imagination.

Paul Ricoeur has written that "we too often and too quickly think of a will that submits and not enough of an imagination that opens itself." Seeing the world sacramentally cannot simply be commanded. However necessary it may be for the survival of the planet in our time, sacramental vision cannot be made a moral imperative. It might better be understood as a Christian aesthetic that needs cultivation. The whole of Catholic praxis is training in sacramental vision. Liturgy and social action, marriage and parenthood, prayer and politics, music and dance and the visual arts, all educate us to appreciate the other as sacramental, worthy companions of our poverty and our engracedness. They teach us to see things as they are. In Gerard Manley Hopkins's words, "These things, these things were here, and but the beholder/Wanting." At present, "beholders" are desperately wanted.

Elements of a new ethic

If the ecological crisis is to be addressed effectively, the ethic of individualism must be replaced with an ethic of companionship. Both creation myths in Genesis agree in their depiction of the human capacity for relationship as that which makes humanity "like God." The exaltation of the individual at the expense of the community, which in its crudest form becomes the "trickle-down" theory of social responsibility, stands in contradiction to this foundational insight of the Jewish and Christian traditions. Not surprisingly, this individualist ethic has debased the image of stewardship from participation in the creative activity of God into cost-benefit analysis. While it is important to attempt to reassert the stewardship motif in its pristine form, it is also necessary to strike at the heart of the problem, to confront impoverished and impoverishing individualism with the relational anthropology of the Jewish and Christian traditions. The crisis of the environment is directly linked to the problem of humanization. For unless nonhuman beings are treated as "thou," human beings will be treated as "it." This is why the appeal to self-interest cannot yield sufficient support in responding to the global environmental crisis. Such an appeal merely reinforces the basic problem. Far more adequate and far more faithful to the Christian tradition is the reappropriation of the companionship motif of the biblical creation stories.

The religious discussion of human responsibility toward creation must move beyond stewardship for the sake of both theology and the environment. Theologically, stewardship has been open to a deist interpretation whereby God is seen as having begun creation and then handed over care of it to humanity. When the image of stewardship dominates our imagination, God can be removed from the scene as human beings are given oversight of the earth and move to center stage in the drama of creation. Too easily the duty of caring for God's world becomes the task of shaping our world. Just as stewards are not anxious for the master's presence lurking over their shoulder, so humanity is content to keep God in a distant heaven.

Companionship evokes a different attitude toward creation. This difference in attitude will be reflected in an environmental ethic grounded on a relational anthropology. Such an ethic does not spring full-blown from the companionship theme. The movement from an over-arching frame of mind to an ethical method is more complex. What the companionship motif provides is an orientation that should guide us in devising an environmental ethic.

The first point of orientation that the companionship motif provides is the desirability of a transformed context within which to develop an environmental ethic. Governed by images of stewardship and ruled by precepts based on self-interest, our moral imaginations are unable to envision an environmental ethic that is adequate to the Jewish and Christian heritage. In contrast, images of companionship encourage the moral imagination to consider that more than the good of the individual self is at stake. Once the intrinsic good of creation is seen, then approaches to the environmental crisis that treat creation only as an instrumental good for humanity become inadequate.

Basic to any ethic is a determination of the moral standing of the "other" one encounters. The reduction of creation to "it" has promoted a loss of respect for nature and an attitude of instrumental rationality. Doing justice to the environment becomes difficult when the context of decision making is so one-sided. Rediscovering the "thou" dimension of all creation provides a corrective to the tendency to relate to nature only as "it" by moving beyond the technological vision of instrumental rationality to a reawakened sacramental vision of companionship. So fundamental a reorientation alters the context for assessing our responsibility toward the environment.

The context of mutuality created by an awareness of both the poverty and the sacramentality of all the created order should yield an ethic less prone to denigrate the intrinsic worth of nonhuman creation. The poverty of the entire created order forces us to acknowledge our ties with the rest of creation in its dependence upon the creator. At the same time the sacramentality of all creation prevents any debasement of our common creaturely state. Our poverty as creatures and our dignity as sacramental mediations of divine grace must be held in tension as twin aspects of our organic connection with all creation.

The second point of orientation for an environmental ethic is an expanded notion of the common good that includes nonhuman creation. The common good, in John XXIII's classic phrase in *Mater et magistra*, embraces "the sum total of those

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conditions of social living whereby people are enabled to achieve their own integral perfection more fully and easily." As a way of elaborating what those "conditions of social living" entail, John went on to list an extensive roster of human rights. Both Paul VI and John Paul II have continued to use the language of human rights when discussing the common good. Theologian David Hollenbach suggests that the use of human rights in recent Catholic social teaching is a way of specifying the essential *needs*, basic *freedoms*, and *relationships* with others that comprise the common good and serve human dignity. In this essay we have suggested a perspective that sees the created order as an "other" with whom we have a relationship and that this relationship is part of the common good. Protecting that relationship with *non-human creation* is properly one of the aims of *human* rights.

Various addresses of Pius XII are also important resources for social ethics. So, for example, while not denying the right to private property, Pius made it clear that property rights are not primary but secondary. Private property is always subordinate to the more fundamental right of all people to the goods of the earth. This reiteration of the priority to be given to the universal destiny of goods contains the germ of an important insight. Pius saw the relationship of humanity to the earth and the rest of its inhabitants as basic to the common good. There is no need to protect the environment by ascribing rights to nature or individual animal species. It is humanity's fundamental human right to share in the goods of the earth that is at stake in the ecological issue. Setting this human right in the context of companionship is necessary, however, to prevent the human right to the universal destiny of the goods of creation from being interpreted according to a narrow mind-set of instrumental rationality.

The third point of orientation for an environmental ethic concerns the means whereby an expanded notion of the common good can be safeguarded and promoted. Here too the tradition of Catholic social thought has something to offer. In *Pacem in terris* John XXIII drew attention to the existence of the "universal common good." The unity of the human family was the basis for John's espousal of a common good that transcended national boundaries. In the same encyclical John noted that the "whole reason for the existence of civil authorities is the realization of the common good." The difficulty was that existing political institutions "no longer correspond to the objective requirements of the universal common good." Subsequent popes have continued John's move from a national to an international to a transnational plane when analyzing social questions.

Issues that touch upon the universal common good—and the environment is one of these—go beyond the competence of individual nation-states. It is necessary to develop vehicles that protect the well-being of the global environment. An international agreement like the Law of the Sea Treaty serves as an illustration of the kind of structure that the papacy advocates for the sake of the universal common good. In contrast, the tendency to define narrowly the self-interest of a nation—as the Reagan administration did in opposing the Law of the Sea Treaty or as Japan has done in resisting fishing and whaling treaties—remains a major obstacle to building effective vehicles for the universal common good.

The language of the common good challenges political arrangements not only at the level of transnational issues. Ours is a nation that has prized individual liberty and has a strong attraction to free market economics. But we cannot avoid asking what social mechanisms on a national level must be devised so that the varied activities of citizens are directed to the common good, understood as including the good of creation. Romantic calls for simpler lifestyles or ideological reliance on purely voluntary measures are simply insufficient. Debate on the specific nature of these necessary mechanisms requires political leadership notably lacking at all levels of government.

No proposed environmental ethic can avoid confronting the pressing question of the relationship between ecology and economic development. Are ecological concerns to be traded off for the creation of jobs in poor areas? Or vice-versa? Is industrialization to be discouraged in nations with undeveloped economies for the sake of preserving certain animal and plant species? The common good cannot be a mere abstraction which prescinds from specific social and historical conditions. Building a shared understanding on the matter of the common good and the place accorded to the environment among other goods is a crucial enterprise for true development.

In *Redemptor hominis* John Paul II opposes a false development that is "dilapidating at an accelerated pace material and energy resources, and compromising the geophysical environment...." This critique of forms of development that ignore the earth's ecosystem echoes an earlier position articulated by many third-world hierarchies. At the 1971 Synod the bishops stated that "such is the demand for resources and energy by the richer nations, whether capitalist or socialist, and such are the effects of dumping by them in the atmosphere and the sea that irreparable damage would be done to the essential elements of life on earth, such as air and water, if their high rates of consumption and pollution, which are constantly on the increase, were extended

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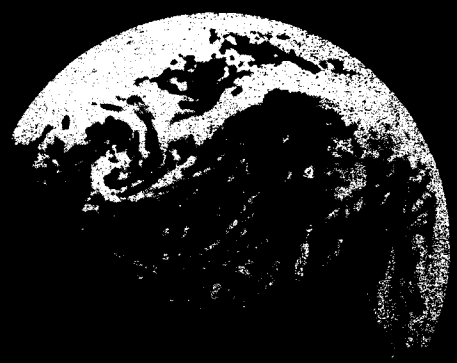

"I BELIEVE THE CHURCH WOULD DO WELL TO PONDER ITS RICH TRADITION OF ETHICAL STEWARDSHIP OF NATURE, TO STUDY & DISCUSS IT, TO RENDER IT RELEVANT TO A WORLD IN NEED OF A POWERFUL REFORMATION OF THE STEWARDSHIP IDEA."

WILLIAM K. REILLY
EPA Administrator
Commonweal
November 17, 1989

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to the whole of mankind."

Donal Dorr has suggested that the episcopal view helps explain the use of the strong language about exploitation that is found in many third-world pronouncements about the international economic system. For too long the presumption was that the task was to "raise" poorer nations to the level of production and consumption found in richer countries. The 1971 Synod pointed out, however, that such a view, whatever other failings it has, ignores the abuse of the environment that has accompanied development based on the first-world model. This development has come at the price of exploitation, directly the exploitation of the earth.

An indirect form of exploitation is the overuse of the universal goods of the earth for the benefit of a few, penalizing people in nations where economic development was slow in occurring. The earth cannot sustain everyone at the level of consumption found in the first-world. The first nations to undergo modern industrialization have used more than their fair share of the earth's resources. Nations seeking economic development now must compensate for the abuses of those who benefited from earlier exploitation of the earth. According to third-world leaders, the limits now proposed on development constitute an exploitation of poor nations. No consensus yet exists on how to reconcile ecological concerns and developmental needs, but some headway in resolving them is a *sine qua non* if the environmental movement is to make progress.

Getting it right

An attitudinal shift is foundational for dealing with the environmental crisis, and theology has a leading role to play in this endeavor. The main contribution of the church in the ecological crisis should be to foster a correct attitude toward all of God's creation. The motif of companionship is an important initial stage for establishing the imperative of a new way of relating to the created order. Without that starting point, the problems of developing a politics and economics cognizant of the ecological common good will be multiplied.

There is the danger that the language of companionship could be understood as simply fostering romantic forms of opposition to technology. But a simplistic "back to nature" movement fomenting broad opposition to technology is a distortion of a proper theology of creation. Technology is an outgrowth of our own human nature as creative beings. Unless we do violence to ourselves, technology will continue. What is needed is the wisdom to direct the process of technological change, not to stop it. The primacy of ethics and politics over technology must be asserted. First, we must assess the human goods that technology must serve. Second, the political process is the arena in which many of the moral choices will be worked through and implemented. Effective political action must follow careful ethical reflection. To fail in either of these realms is to permit

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technology to slip beyond human direction. In order to guide change there must be a sense of the goods that are to be sought and an appreciation of the ranking of goods that may conflict. Only then can we know what goods technology must serve, what policy choices are to be made, at what price, and what institutional arrangements are required for implementation. From the outset, however, the scale of goods will be skewed unless humanity's relations with nature include an awareness of the "thou-ness" of creation.

Although, we believe, the retrieval of the companionship theme and a deepened commitment to the common good tradition are required criteria for the development of an environmental ethic, other criteria are also essential. The Jewish and Christian understanding of creation should not be wedded to any economic ideology. Neither capitalism nor socialism in their historical realizations differs in the way they view creation and humanity's relation to it. Both Adam Smith and Karl Marx had a strong bias toward instrumental rationality. At the same time, neither system should be dismissed as inevitably inhospitable to environmental concerns. Whether or not a sacramental vision of creation can take root in either approach remains to be seen. In both systems what must be addressed is the proper balance between the environment and economic development. Here the magisterium's theme of true development is a reminder that economic growth must be based on a model that is ecologically sustainable. In this regard the World Council of Churches' call for a criterion of sustainable efficiency strikes an important note for future decision making.

In addition, the criterion of social justice cannot be lost in the struggle for ecological responsibility. A simple disavowal of economic growth may perpetuate injustice to humans in the name of nonhumans. Ecology has to do with the relationship of organisms to the total environment, including other organisms of the same or different species. Ecological balance has unquestionably been lost in the way that human beings have treated nonhuman nature. Righting the imbalance, however, cannot entail injustice to fellow human beings for the sake of other species. Poorer nations will not be willing to forego economic development at the behest of wealthier nations, who have belatedly seen the results of their own assaults on nature in the quest for more and more expansion. To avoid a new imbalance, an environmental ethic must be informed by a careful analysis of the demands of economic justice.

Justice in economic development, economic growth premised on sustainable efficiency, and a heightened role for the environment in our understanding of the common good are three vital elements in any environmental ethic. But seeing the world rightly precedes our ability to act wisely and justly. The first task before us, that which theology can assist, is to revision all beings as united in their createdness, given to one another as companions, sacraments of "the love that moves the sun and other stars." □

RATZINGER'S 'NATURE' ISN'T NATURAL

AQUINAS, CONTRACEPTION & STATISTICS

SEBASTIAN MOORE

Christianity was born of a revelatory explosion of the infinite within the heart of the finite, and it has been the task of theology in succeeding ages to appropriate this event using all the resources of mind and heart. How do we speak coherently, and instructively, about this continuing action of the incomprehensible God in the experience of a community, an action recognizable in its worship and ongoing life?

A towering figure in this history is that of Aquinas. His major achievement was to find a way of systematizing the many diverse ideas so far produced for understanding the divine action in human experience. The proponents of these ideas were all seeking to understand our life, in the perspective of faith, as the struggle it is between sin and grace. Sin is the conscious creature's resistance to grace. It is the finite creature resisting the infinite Creator's claim on him/her. But does this resistance come from finitude? This would make the creature intrinsically sinful. No, it comes from the false judgment that finite existence is sufficient unto itself, is its own raison d'être.

So a distinction emerges: between nature—or the structured finitude of the creature—and the sinful absolutizing of nature. Of itself, this nature is not able to attain to union with God—*not* mainly by reason of sin, but because the finite cannot grasp the infinite. So the "grace" (the other member of the existential dyad) that enables the creature for divine union is, *in its essence*, a transforming of the finite, and, only as a result of this, a healing of the sinful. In transforming nature, grace fulfills the creature's openness to the Creator so that the creature lets go of its tight grip on itself as all that there is.

SEBASTIAN MOORE, O.S.B., *is chaplain at Boston College. His most recent book is* Jesus the Liberator of Desire *(Crossroad).*

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Aquinas's distinction between nature and nature-sinfully-absolutized is both beautiful and freeing. For on the one hand our nature, while always involved in the struggle between sin and grace, does not get its shape from that struggle, but only from its Creator, who is, as it were, wooing the beauty that first came from his hand. And on the other hand, grace establishes its character as *beyond nature*, not as *against sin*—in other words, as *supernatural*. Grace, the unimaginable mystery of the transforming infinite, is no longer to be defined as the remedy for sin. Grace transforms nature while sin absolutizes it. But take out "nature," this new middle term, and sin and grace lock into a conflict that pulls into its orbit all our understanding of the world and God.

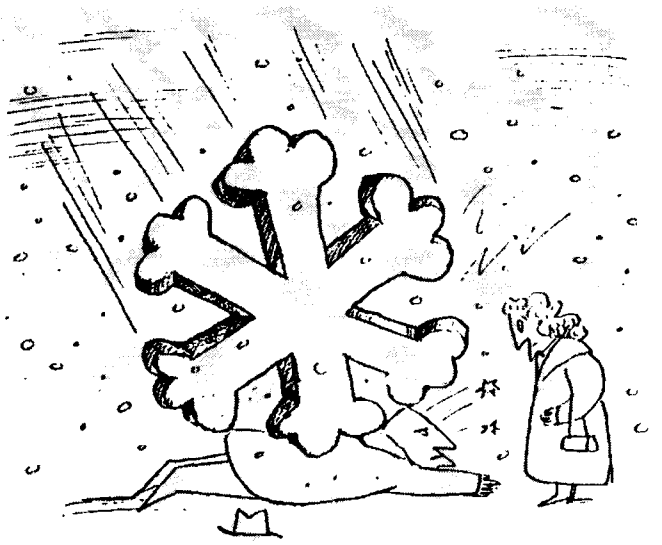
Thus for Aquinas nature and supernature are not two realities, one above the other. Rather, taken together they form a theorem for thinking about the existential realities of sin and grace that does not collapse into the rhetoric of grace-versus-sin to which theology had been confined by the Fathers until the theorem was created. Aquinas understood what sin is—the absolutizing of nature—and what grace is—the transforming of nature. In our day, Lonergan compared the emergence of this theorem (actually discovered by Philip the Chancellor, but understood in its full theological potential by Aquinas) after all the rhetoric that had preceded it, to the noonday sun emerging from the clouds over the Italian landscape. Lonergan was of the opinion that Thomas's theorem of the supernatural does for the complex data of religious experience the massive job of ordering and clarifying that Einstein's theorem of General Relativity does with the data of the physical universe. The comparison is a loose one, of course, but it points to that rare magic worked by a new idea on a whole cluster of problems.

And it was brilliant. It freed up nature to be all of itself, not constrained to reflect God in some mystical way. It freed up the Godhead to be its infinite incomprehensible self. Yet it kept the two realities together, as they are given together in our experience. Above all, it enabled the mind to allow for the total, mysterious gratuitousness of transforming grace, in a way that also allowed full scope to the mystery of our freedom.

Until we have an adequate theory coordinating the two orders, the human being's wrestle with God is bound to be understood in a way that tends to confuse finitude with sinfulness and to reduce grace to being the opposite of sin. Aquinas's theorem of a supernatural order gets us beyond the confusion that arises if the existential way of speaking is all we have, which is the crisis of Augustinianism, for all its dramatic superiority. And yet the theorem does not involve separating the divine from the human. (I recall my dear friend, Kenelm Foster, O.P., in one of our many walks in Cambridge in the old days, trying to commend to my fiery Augustinian mind the merits of Aquinas, and ending, "And God, how he purified the Latin!")

But the theorem only keeps the two orders together provided we remember it is a theorem—a posited, coordinating idea—and not a description. There is no such thing as "nature" over there and "supernature" over here and above it. In other words, there's not a two-story theological universe.

Alas, what tended overwhelmingly to happen to Aquinas's



idea after him, what I will call "baroque" scholasticism, was precisely that: it became a two-story universe. The two orders were reified and tended to become itemized. Thus certain activities and lifestyles were characterized as supernatural—the priesthood, the religious life, for instance—while others were classified essentially as natural—marriage, for instance.

At the watershed that was Vatican II, the two-story universe of baroque scholasticism came down in ruins. We are still very much in the aftermath of this cataclysm. Vast seminary buildings raised in this country on the eve of Vatican II, a veritable monument to the two-story, two-class church, now stand empty.

In the ferment of Vatican II, with a whole image of spiritual reality breaking down, it was very natural, and probably inevitable, that the blame for the old constriction would be laid to the door of "scholasticism." The vital distinction—between Aquinas's vastly intelligent way of thinking about grace and nature, and its baroque successor—was lost to view. The fatal turn had been taken, it then seemed, by Thomas himself: the turn from a monastic, unified theology, to a disputatious, dialectical theology. (This diagnosis—a misdiagnosis—will prove to be of critical importance later in this article.) "Back to the Fathers!" became a frequently heard slogan. Indeed, it was the slogan of the revisionists, the dismantlers of the ecclesiastical triumphalism on which I was raised. I well remember the sense of liberation I had when some theologian said, "For God's sake, the two poles are not supernature and nature, but good and evil!" This was a moment of liberation from the baroque, out-there two-story theological universe that was all we knew of what we thought was Aquinas.

One of the leading revisionists was Joseph Ratzinger. In recent years, it is customary to point to a dramatic change in his theology from "liberal" to "conservative." But a deeper analysis seems called for. The important point about Ratzinger's theology, at this moment in the church's history, is his preference for the Augustinian vision over the mind of Aquinas, and his preference, within the medieval period, for Bonaventure over Aquinas. Such a preference is a matter of temperament, which it would be invid-

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ious to fault. But when this preference becomes a standpoint from which the whole theological life of the church is being overseen and disciplined, it is necessary to uphold against it the history of theology, in particular the latter's historic engagement with the growing Western mind, a mind that needed to be liberated by theology into an unimpeded exploration of the natural world.

All this may seem esoteric. It is anything but that. For what is going to be the result of going back to Augustine, for whom "nature" still meant nature as involved in the struggle between sin and grace, and forsaking Aquinas's insight which differentiated simple creaturehood and the supernatural, the finite in contrast with the transforming infinite? The result of such a retreat is that "nature" will (1) not be something which "right reason" can discover; (2) not be something to be defined by examination of its constitutive principles and acts; and (3) therefore be "truly known" only when placed in the full vision which *faith* permits. Significant consequences follow. Gone precisely is the "nature" that Aquinas's theorem freed to be itself, independent of and not shaped by some mystical vision. By "nature," Ratzinger and his followers have reverted to a pre-Aquinian, mystical understanding, "nature as in the mind of God." And the mind of God is disclosed, partially, to us through the church. And of the church, the Petrine office is the definitive magisterium.

Thus "nature," in terms of which that magisterium is now saying that contraception is *contra*-nature, is nature as seen by Christian "faith," into which that faith has a privileged insight. But by using "nature" in this restricted sense, a whole different approach to apprehending reality comes to the fore, and Aquinas's vast achievement is undermined. In vain, for example, does one point out to exponents of this position that the relationship between coition and conception is statistical: that the possibility of conception resulting from intercourse has its own intelligibility, not understood in the ancient world, and that this new understanding dissolves the moral difference between "natural" and "artificial" birth control: for both interfere with the probability-shaped relationship between coition and conception. But all this is made irrelevant when we no longer consider nature as subject to "right reason" and consider it understandable only through the eyes of faith, the definitive organ of which is the papal magisterium.

Thus, while it may appear to the common, inquiring mind that the coition-conception relationship in the post-Aristotelian biology is not inviolable, and that the Catholic acceptance of Natural Family Planning (NFP) implies the acceptance of this position, to the eyes of "faith," attentive to "faith's" ecclesial interpreter, this relationship appears quite differently. It becomes sacralized. And thus this pope can say that the ban on contraception is "grounded in central Christian beliefs about God and man."

The cost of this theological tour de force is enormous. Gone, in the name of an imposed mysticism of nature, is the whole precious heritage of natural law. Gone are the grounds for papal statements to address themselves not just to the church but to "persons of good will," as John XXIII was so fond of doing. Gone, above all, is what is perhaps the most brilliant theological insight ever conceptualized and systematized, Aquinas's theorem of the supernatural. And really desperate is the expedient of trying to return to an earlier period, before the explosion of new questions that was the glory of high scholasticism, to a way of thinking which owed its beauty precisely to the fact that the questions had not yet been raised but were still, if you like, active in the psyche as an undifferentiated and childlike hunger for the truth.

Assuredly, today there are new questions, some of them rather frightening. But how on earth can they be tackled by a mind that is out of synch with the intellectual passion that gave us Aquinas's theorem of the supernatural? Indeed, a really vigorous and confident response to the new questions would be the best evidence of that perennial sensitivity to new questions that was present in scholasticism at its best. In confusing scholasticism as a vigorous heuristic with scholasticism as a tottering edifice of reified abstractions, and abandoning both, contemporary Rome is engaged in the very un-Roman activity of emptying out the baby with the bath water.

Does this notion of a privileged faith-insight into nature that bypasses science and instead hearkens back to an early, undifferentiated vision remind one of anything? You've got it: fundamentalism. The notion of a privileged insight of faith into the human generative process is a classy form of "creation science." It is a great deal more sophisticated than telling geologists what their fossils "really" mean, but it is the same in structure: the return, within an inalienably scientific culture, to a way of thinking that preceded all the questions that gave rise to that culture. It is the same blind spot as the fundamentalists' escape from reason, and it seems to have an uncanny power in our time. It brings together Ratzinger and the various promoters of anti-intellectualism, the touchy-feely people, the New Age people—yes indeed, Matthew Fox! Strange bedfellows, all associated, in spite of themselves, in the flight from understanding.

Of course, I am not suggesting that Ratzinger is a fundamentalist. That would be a preposterous way to speak of a serious theologian. What I am pointing to is something more generic, the attempt to recover a predifferentiated awareness, of which fundamentalism is a very crude subset, and of which there are many other forms. Lonergan used to predict that in the present crisis of culture, most people will either go with every new trend or try to recover a vanished mental world, while only a small minority will be about laying the foundations of the future. I don't see how any of us can feel sure of belonging to the latter category.

A friend who is familiar with the work of Ratzinger has pointed out what a small role, if any, is played in it by what Lonergan calls intellectual conversion, the discovery of intellectual blind spots, the recalling of the point where they first occurred: not, as I have already suggested in this case, with Aquinas, but after Aquinas. The tragedy is

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that as long as such insight is lacking, all failures in the church are going to be attributed to moral and religious causes, not to intellectual oversights. How seldom does one hear theological critiques of official positions talking about "mistakes," "confusions," or "simply getting it wrong." One hears rather of an "overemphasis" on this or that. To say, in any intelligible sense, that married people have to "intend" conception with every act of intercourse is simply a mistake, and a rather dumb one. But instead of admitting this, the remedy has been to foster a more deeply ingrained fortress mentality, an ever more centralized papacy, and a church that has less and less credibility on these issues. Is it not possible that Ratzinger's bitter disappointment with the post-Vatican II church is because of the latter's inevitable failure to live up to the beautiful, liturgically rich prescholastic scenario that he had for the church? All of us at the time of Vatican II, I think, were so enamored of the patristic vision that baroque scholasticism had totally obscured that we forgot that the church we were liberating from that straitjacket consisted of people imbued with the culture of science and instant communication, mass media, and democracy who were not about to become the congregation of Augustine or the catechumens of Cyril of Jerusalem.

I have long been fascinated by Lonergan's concern to recover Aquinas's "theorem of the supernatural," with its wonderful liberation of nature for our exploration and of grace for our silence. I have also been concerned, before and since *Humanae vitae*, with the church's position on birth control. If anyone had told me that these two concerns are closely connected, I would have laughed. But they are. Underlying the present Roman position on birth control is the Augustinian concept of nature, not yet subject to the Thomistic differentiation between the natural and the supernatural that is the watershed of Catholic theology, and therefore not subject to the critique of Bernard Lonergan who, authentically updating Aquinas, invokes a post-Aristotelian biology with its statistical relationship between coition and conception, and observes that to regard this relationship as inviolable is to exclude NFP as well as so-called artificial contraception.

And of course, the present crisis over contraception is only the tip of the iceberg. Beneath lies the crisis of a ruling theology that is ignoring the key-moment in its tradition, and is in consequence lining up with the anti-intellectualism of the age, whose fruit is fundamentalism. The usual criticism of this theology is to say that it is ultramontane. It is. But at the deepest level of its motivation, it is neo-Augustinian. For instance, how is liberation theology, how are the base communities in Brazil, going to look to a mind that does not accord to nature its proper integrity but sees it always under the shadow of sin shutting out grace? I think we have our answer in the treatment handed out to these movements by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Sooner or later, this deep crisis in the ruling theology will have to be addressed by the whole church. Vatican III?

I have argued elsewhere (London *Tablet*, October 7, 1989) that no sound theology lies behind the ban on contraception. The conclusion of this article is that a very unsound theology underlies the present escalation of that ban to a quasi-faith status. □

STAGE

LIFE AFTER FILM

'GRAND HOTEL' & 'ST. LOUIS'

When *Shenandoah* was revived last summer, I saw the Gary Geld musical for the first time and spent the evening wondering why anyone bothers trying to make a stage musical out of a successful film. Now we have had two new musicals that provide an opportunity to contemplate that transformational genre. *Meet Me in St. Louis* offers support for the why-bother point of view, but *Grand Hotel* suggests that genuine stage life can result from such a metamorphosis.

Perhaps *Grand Hotel* is a special case. After all, it has gone through a great many generic changes since it first turned up as a novel and then a play in Germany. In this country, Vicki Baum's multipurpose work began its very long Broadway run in late 1930, became a best-selling novel in 1931, and emerged as an all-star MGM film (Garbo, Crawford, Beery, two Barrymores) in 1932. It has spawned a great many offspring which often fail to acknowledge their parent; the television series, "Hotel," is the most recent, highly visible example.

The musical *Grand Hotel*, however, wants only to give new form and new force to the original work. It has kept Baum's cast of characters: the aging ballerina; the impecunious baron who is a thief; the typist who sells herself as well as her skills and who wants to be a film star; the domineering but honest provincial businessman who learns to lie to his associates and to cheat on his wife; the dying bookkeeper who wants to experience LIFE before he leaves it; the sad and sardonic doctor, badly wounded in the war, an observer of what the first musical number calls "The Grand Parade." There have been changes and additions, some more useful than others. Not much is gained by turning Baum's coldly efficient reception clerk, Rohna, into a martinet with homosexual designs on Erik (Baum's hall porter, Senf), the birth of whose child gives a life-affirming frame to a many-stranded tale of death and loss. On the other hand, when Baum's fussy Suzette (the ballerina Grushinskaya's all-purpose servant) becomes Raffaela (the companion with an unspoken love for the ballerina), statuesque, handsome Karen Akers—a presence on any stage—gets a good role and two strong songs. (When Suzette was renamed for the occasion, I wonder if someone remembered that Rafaela Ottiano had played the character in the film.)

The intermeshing stories of the hotel guests manage to transcend their essential sentimental melodrama by becoming elements in an overall pattern, the life of the Grand Hotel which—like life itself—moves on, unimpeded by broken bodies, broken dreams. It is in the creation of this pattern, this movement, that the musical is most successful. The music and book are by Robert Wright, George Forrest, and Luther Davis, conventional

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Richard Hayes, who served as *Commonweal*'s drama critic from 1952 to 1961, succeeding Walter Kerr, died of a heart attack at his home in New York on January 8 at the age of sixty. May he rest in peace.

Broadway warhorses (*Kismet*), but the special quality of the show almost certainly derives from the work of Tommy Tune as director and choreographer and Maury Yeston, credited with "additional music and lyrics." Tune, Yeston, and several of the performers (Akers, Liliane Montevecchi, Kathi Moss) had already worked together on *Nine*, an often inventive reworking of a film, Fellini's *8½*.

Tommy Tune is clearly the dominant creative force in the musical. Although the flow of the piece occasionally stops, as other musicals do, for a solo in a spotlight, the show gives the impression of constant motion, sometimes—even during those stops—by a kind of visual overlay which reminds the audience that something else is going on somewhere else, even as we concentrate on the performer in the spot. The show is not so much staged as choreographed, and the set (Tony Walton) and the lighting (Jules Fisher) become part of the dance.

Tune and the other makers of the musical have built on Baum's novel even more than on the other versions of her story. Money is central to all of the *Grand Hotel*s, which explore the consequences of poverty, genteel and ordinary. The musical underscores the author's relentless preoccupation with the subject, not only through its parallel plots, but through a chorus of scullery workers, commanding figures who appear periodically, shaking tin dishes against wire containers—like giant tambourines—and singing "Some Have and Some Have Not." This may be a touch of Brechtian overemphasis (the show *is* set in Berlin in 1928), but some of the other dance devices are more effective. In the novel, when Grushinskaya falls in love with the baron and decides not to commit suicide, she remembers a number from her repertoire "in which love and death danced a pas de deux." Tune provides such a dance, an oddly old-fashioned pas de deux, but moves it to the end of the show for the baron's death.

Best of all is what Tune has done for the dying bookkeeper, Kringelein. There are long and tedious passages in the novel in which the character ruminates on his quest for LIFE. As Walter Kerr said in the *New York Times* (December 17, 1989), both Kringeleins—Sam Jaffe on stage and Lionel Barrymore in the film—outacted their colleagues, but it is almost impossible in a straight performance to get the sense of discovery that each new experience brings to the character. It can be done in dance and in a show that, forgoing naturalism, is itself a dance. There is a Charleston number in which Michael Jeter throws off his tottering character and gives a happily frenzied performance that lets us know what Kringelein's mind and heart are capable of. He helps put the *grand* in *Grand Hotel*.

I have not left much space for *Meet Me in St. Louis*, which may be just as well. The movie (1944), which I just saw again on video, is a lovely evocation of an America which may never have existed but should have, with period songs ("Meet Me in St. Louis," "Under the Bamboo Tree") and new ones by Hugh

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Martin and Ralph Blane that have become standards ("The Boy Next Door," "The Trolley Song," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas"). Martin and Blane have returned to the original, added songs, and borrowed some from *Best Foot Forward*; "Raving Beauty" worked better as a love duet in that show than it does as a courting contest here. Hugh Wheeler's book follows the film scene by scene, using much of the original dialogue, but to very little effect. There are performers in *St. Louis* (George Hearn, Betty Garrett) who have done fine work elsewhere, and there are scenic devices—the movable house, the trolley, the ice pond, the fireworks-filled fair—that are meant to reproduce the feel of the film. And yet, the musical is dead on the stage. The words are there and the music is there and a hard-working band of performers, but the spirit has gone out of the piece. It may be that Louis Burke and Joan Brickhill, the South African director and choreographer who dote on American musicals, are just not Vincente Minnelli. Or it may be that successful films—*Grand Hotel* notwithstanding—should be left on the screen.

GERALD WEALES

SCREEN

DEVILISH DUOS

'SHE-DEVIL,' 'ROSES' & 'BLAZE'

She-Devil starts poorly. Roseanne Barr and Meryl Streep are both involved with the same man (Ed Begley, Jr.), but rarely with each other. Separately, they achieve some good comic effects. Barr, as Begley's neglected spouse and an overburdened housewife, underacts dreadfully at first. (Her phlegmatic style works better pouring cold water on someone else's hot temper, as on "Roseanne," than expressing her own.) Watching her endure household slavery, two kids from hell, and low jibes at her looks is just no fun.

Streep's comic zest, though initially straitjacketed in the caricature role of a romance novelist, helps the movie pick up energy halfway through. She's stolen Begley from Barr; he's an accountant and she claims to need his "manly" expertise. What she wants is his body, which she gets, not counting on Barr's ability to engineer a role reversal by dumping the kids, dog, and domesticity into Streep's lavish mansion. Unlike Barr, Streep makes suffering interesting through wild exaggeration and a gift for physical comedy. Her strong suit on stage was always humor; in late-1970s New York theater, she often shone as a daffy romantic. In *She-Devil*, it's a relief to watch her jumping off a pedestal, almost satirizing her own, well-crafted "loftiness" in the cartoon of Mary Fisher.

She-Devil, based on Fay Weldon's *Life and Loves of a She-Devil*, is directed by Susan Seidelman, one of the few woman directors active in Hollywood today. In certain ways, it replays her *Desperately Seeking Susan*, where a suburban housewife "trades places" with someone more flamboyant. For Seidelman, suburban domesticity is a fate worse than death, and escape is empowerment.

Barr is appealing in executing her revenge. Streep comes to her senses and liberates herself from step-domesticity. But both women can *only* suffer when housewives. The film fosters the notion that no woman can work at home and have dignity.

Begley has a thankless role as a philanderer, and Streep's Latino servant—whose hormones are also his main characteristic—is the movie's only other male character. If a male-oriented movie presented such a reductive image of women, it would quickly be labeled sexist. True, reactive sexism from women is not as bad as active sexism against them. But it's not pleasant. Worse, it fits this film's coarse tone.

War of the Roses outdoes *She-Devil* for vulgarity, but often makes up for it in other ways. Directed by Danny De Vito, and starring Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner as embattled spouses, the film relies on excessively vile black humor. It lacks heart, soul, or real insides for its characters, but has dramatic momentum. Its visual flair and dynamic pacing propel the film along on the route to a domestic Armageddon.

Like *She-Devil*, *War* is cynical about marriage. Domestic life goes awry not because of philandering, but because Turner finally realizes that she dislikes her shallow husband, an ambitious lawyer whose superficiality Douglas lithely catches. De Vito not only directs but plays Douglas's partner, narrating the film in neat flashbacks. He initiates the first by declaring, "The poor bastards never had a chance." The movie closes sentimentally, but its plot generally sustains that keynote. *War* literalizes the battle of the sexes—here, two ignorant armies that clash by night.

The battles between Turner and Douglas have their humorous, slapstick moments, especially when De Vito makes use of tender memories or expensive gifts from earlier, happily married life to punctuate the couple's escalations in nastiness. Things dominate this marriage and they are used to illustrate how it is torn asunder. Everything once bright and beautiful is twisted. In part, this fits the look of the film. All the surfaces shine inside the opulent house that Turner and Douglas make and destroy together.

Still, it's frustrating never to get to know these people, and unbelievable that their venom goes as far as it does; one step back and the movie loses its power. Like *She-Devil*, *War* assaults neoconservative myths of happy homes, but in a typical eighties' way, through slick ironic inversion. The characters are ciphers, propped up to push an ideology. The irony which our comedians are addicted to is never original; it only deconstructs to leave a void. And *War* is, in a way, literal deconstruction.

The film is vintage eighties in another way: the omnipotence of real estate. Things get really nasty only when Turner and Douglas both refuse to leave their house and try to drive the other out. Their struggle to keep ownership rights is the *ne plus ultra* of a time in which the idea of home has become so powerful that it has displaced not just romance, but even its old ally, marriage, as the central core of the myth of domesticity.

De Vito is good as a straight man to Douglas and Turner, a

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twist, but a welcome one. In "Taxi," and movies (with the same stars) such as *Romancing the Stone* and *Jewel of the Nile*, his midget-devil shtick got tedious. Here, as supporting star and director, he's under better control. Still, one aspect of *War* escapes him. As in *When Harry Met Sally*, *War* stages an all-out assault on the notion of sexual harmony, then tries to tag on a closing affirmation. Watch for its climactic inconsistency: an exchange of "I always loved you's" juxtaposed to Turner's final gesture. And watch for the dog: is its fate as grisly as it seems, or something less gruesome? The editing makes the cruelty ambiguous. Is it that De Vito doesn't have the courage of his coarse convictions? Or that he doesn't know how to make a movie that transcends counterpoint of myths and antimyths about the hearth?

Blaze stars Paul Newman as Louisiana governor Earl Long, who in 1959 defied the political gods and started running around with a buxom stripper, Blaze Starr (Lolita Davidovich). Even in Louisiana, this was too much to take. Directed and written by Ron Shelton, whose *Bull Durham* also reveled in raucous Southern energy, *Blaze* celebrates flamboyant roguery for its heart of gold. It may not be truthful, but makes for delightful Americana.

The discovery in the film is newcomer Davidovich, a considerable romanticization of Blaze Starr. (Starr helped Shelton in making the film and has a bit part, so it's no surprise that the film cleans up her act.) Davidovich makes convincing the claims of innocence and attempts at dignity; she has a soft body but a strong, almost sculpted, intelligent face. As in *Bull Durham*, Shelton shows himself capable of presenting multiple aspects of feminine power. Unlike *She-Devil* and *War of the Roses*, he is able to evoke from Davidovich and Newman a convincing, affectionate battle of wills between a man and woman. Although he conveniently leaves out the fact that Long was married, he shapes a believable love story about real people.

The pacing of the film is uneven, the plot wobbly. We are never sure how badly Blaze hurt Long's career or how much he suffered from advancing "progressive ideas" with his down-home populism and support (when safe) for civil rights. The political foreground is colorful, especially because of fine support from character actors like Jerry Hardin as Long's crony and lieutenant governor. But the background is blurry, especially on economics and race relations. When Newman declares, "The three greatest friends of the poor are Jesus Christ, Sears Roebuck, and Earl Long," one savors the irreverent hyperbole, but would like to know more. Does Shelton really see this man as a hero, and why?

Newman makes him seem one. Professionalism sometimes has such an opaque surface that it's hard to pinpoint what's under it. Newman's scrawny geezer prances, gesticulates, and demagogues so vociferously that—it happened last year to me in *Rain Man*—for ten minutes I really did forget I was in a theater. He and Davidovich even evoke tears for the old rascal at the end. Shelton hits no home run here, but, as in *Durham*, he redefines the patriotic film; he loves America for its sinners.

TOM O'BRIEN

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Homosexual priests & nuns: two assessments

HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE RELIGIOUS LIFE
Edited by Jeannine Gramick
Crossroad, $14.95, 251 pp.

GAY PRIESTS
Edited by James G. Wolf
Harper & Row, $17.95, 192 pp.

Eugene Kennedy

In no area is the humanity of the Catholic church—or its kinship with all other earthly institutions—more evident than in its attitudes toward sexuality, which are warped by ambiguity as thick and tingling as the air after a lightning storm. For if, at one moment, the church can seem dogmatically unforgiving of the reminders of the flesh, in the next it can be as pastorally patient and understanding as Jesus was about sexual conflicts and failings. These two books are products of this equivocal tradition, allowing us to hear the voices of homosexual priests and religious, as if in a vast antiphonal choir, singing of the sadness, joy, and hope of their lives; though not always, it must be added, in perfect harmony.

Arriving at a moment of heightened concern about the extent and implications of homosexuality among the ordained and vowed, these volumes transcend the anecdotal evidence on which most discussions of this subject have so far been based. These are real men and women telling us of life on the frontlines of their experience as gay priests and religious. They speak as persons who, beneath the rage of battle, manage to find a peaceful niche in which to pray and think about their lives.

Jeannine Gramick is well known for her work with gay religious and her book is largely composed of autobiographical reflections by men and women who have faced and come variously to terms with their homosexual identities. This many-storied structure rises on the substantial foundation of reflective chapters by historian John Boswell and theologians Rosemary Ruether and Daniel Maguire. Boswell suggests that being gay is nothing new to the religious life, citing among other pieces of evidence, monastic poetry which implies that spiritual and erotic bonding between members of the same sex, if not commonplace, was not unusual in past centuries.

Although he acknowledges that "there have been some tragic aspects to the intersection of homosexuality and religious life," resulting in "gays and lesbians [being]...terribly alone," he urges the latter, whom he describes as "doubly marginalized," to "recognize and rejoice in the centrality of their position, the importance of religious life to gay culture throughout Christian history, and the prominence of gay people and their feelings and sensitivities within Christian religious life."

Although Rosemary Ruether and Daniel Maguire contribute characteristically thoughtful chapters, it is Boswell who speaks like a knowing therapist to the feelings expressed in the autobiographical contributions of gay priests and religious that follow these opening essays. The Yale historian senses the damaged self-esteem underlying the cries from the hearts of these essayists. Bedeviled by, but absorbed with their problems of identity, they describe their plight of finding that within the church their longings for affiliation are regularly counterpointed by the traumas of actual and potential rejection. Liking and wanting to help people, more sensitive to the rhythms of the world and its inhabitants than many of their peers, they are vulnerable to hurt in every act of reaching out or serving others.

They love the church but, often echoing the popular contemporary liberation themes, they find it an oppressor as blind and devouring of their humanity as a totalitarian regime. They have all made peace, some heroically, with the burden that gayness, despite Boswell's assertion, seems to be at the present time in religious life. Readers, who cannot but be touched by the goodness and sincerity of these men and women, will also better understand their inner worlds for which acceptance and support are so crucial for survival and functioning, the very simple human responses the official church systematically denies them through banning the Dignity chapters that seem so helpful to them.

In the first part of *Gay Priests*, James Wolf, a married layman, reports and analyzes the responses of 101 gay priests to a questionnaire on a wide variety of attitudes and issues concerning their lives and work. The second part consists of four essays written by gay priests about their personal and pastoral experiences. Mr. Wolf, having splinted together two quite different approaches, assures us that, modest as the endeavor is, it works, and that, in effect, the truth is here for us to inspect. He rightly acknowledges that the survey component is burdened with sampling difficulties and the other hazards of social sci-

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ence exploration, suggesting that the results, although not "definitive," do "outline some interpersonal, psychological, and spiritual concerns that appear to be productive topics for more extensive research."

Talking smoothly and confidently, Wolf wants us to make less rather than more of the uneven stitching in the seam that holds this opus together. One cannot, however, mistake the tone of the introduction by Jay R. Feierman, M.D., identified as clinical associate professor of psychiatry at the University of New Mexico. He seems somewhat irritated with prospective readers, urging them, if they "mainly want to know what percentage of priests are gay, to carefully examine your own motivation. A question such as yours may tell as much about you as it does about them."

Wolf's report, contentious or not, does present almost the only organized data we have on gay priests. We must, therefore, be grateful for it, for much can be read, as biblical scholars remind us, even from fragments. How can the full truth of the contemporary priesthood be constructed with the estimates that Wolf's respondents offer on the pervasiveness of gay clergy? "Two-thirds of our sample," the author observes, "estimated between 40 percent and 60 percent of the ordained clergy are gay....Three-fourths of our sample estimated between 40 percent and 70 percent of current seminarians are gay." The highest assessments of gay clergy and seminarians come from those most recently ordained. These, Wolf reminds us, are "impressions" that may reflect "wishful thinking," but he does conclude that homosexuality is not incompatible with the priesthood, suggesting that gays are not drawn to the priesthood to find an all-male sanctuary but out of higher-order motives of service.

Wolf also tells us that many members of the clergy, at least as typified by his respondents, "have gone beyond a stage of merely questioning the church's authority in requiring the vow of celibacy to a point where they have managed to compartmentalize their sexual lives." Combining this observation with the number of sexual contacts reported by his subjects justifies his somewhat restrained conclusion that "the findings of this study bring up many questions about past and future development of the Catholic clergy and the Roman Catholic church as a whole." Almost three-quarters of Wolf's sample claim that they have occasionally or frequently engaged in homosexual activity since ordination; 53.5 percent state that they have become more sexually active since ordination.

While this sample is small, it constitutes actual data, which coincide with impressions held by many persons who work closely with priests and seminarians. While Wolf is at pains to present his subjects sympathetically, drawing, for example, on the work of the late social psychologist Gordon Allport to support his characterization of these men as "victims," he does not explore questions that may be validly asked on the basis of his own information. Discussing the confusion about celibacy, he suggests that it "is perhaps better to think of a priest's commitment to celibacy (in the traditional sense) as a commitment to fidelity with the church in much the same way as a man and a woman promise to remain faithful

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to each other in marriage. And just as a husband's infidelity does not automatically lead to divorce from his wife, so the sexual activity of a priest does not irrevocably negate his commitment to and his position in the church."

There is no saving irony in this comparison, no sense that acts of infidelity betray and finally kill many marriages far short of the divorce court. The absence of any full description or understanding of the persons with whom priests have their sometimes numerous sexual contacts is distressing. While the reader is asked, especially by the essayists, to be sympathetic to the dilemma of gay men denied expression of their sexuality by an oppressive institution, there is apparently little interest in exploring the possible damage they may do to themselves and others (their partners, congregations, students...) through behavior that they so easily rationalize. Even the reader most determined to be understanding will feel that gay clergy themselves are served poorly by a presentation that fails to explore the nature and demands of fidelity and trustworthiness in all human relationships.

The Catholic church has been blessed for years with wonderful priests and religious who have been homosexuals. They are frequently models of dedication, asceticism, and self-sacrifice. Their image, however, is largely absent from this survey. Rather the book tends to confirm impressions that a sizable number of profoundly self-absorbed men are struggling with the difficulties of leading double lives. One of the pseudonymous contributors to this book cannot possibly hear the narcissism in his observation that, "Needless to say, having a lover while continuing to live a celibate, rectory way of life can be extremely taxing...."

Many times, these contributors discuss the special "gift" of the gay person for ministry. Still, the self-conscious tone of these assertions may leave the reader feeling that at least some of these individuals who see themselves as talented at helping others are also immensely preoccupied with their own emotional needs. It is difficult to escape the speculation that a reinterpreted notion of the priestly life as "sexually active celibacy" is already in place in the culture of American Catholicism. Granting that the needs of gay priests and religious must be addressed, so too, must the implications of this phenomenon for the church in the U.S.

The many deeply dedicated gay priests and religious I have known over the years never struck me as embroiled with their own psyches. Their ministerial energy flowed from this admirable self-forgetfulness, as indeed it must for heterosexuals as well. But I did not hear their voices in sufficient numbers in these books to make me conclude that the full-range of gay presence in the service of the church is represented. We may be grateful that a beginning has been made in exploring homosexuality in the Catholic church. This start, with its revelations and limitations, makes the need for more intensive explorations of this issue all the more urgent. □

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EUGENE KENNEDY *teaches in the psychology department at Loyola University (Chicago). His most recent book is* Cardinal Bernardin *(Bonus Books).*

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Theologians of several stripes

Lawrence S. Cunningham

This hefty volume of Luther's theological writings is one of those valuable books which every theologian and/or theological student should welcome. The editor had a clear idea of what he wanted to do and a set of criteria to accomplish his ends. This is a capacious anthology of Luther's *theological* writings and, as such, there is little of Luther the exegete in these selections. Furthermore—and this is a very nice touch—the editor wants the prospective user of this book to regard Luther as a *doctor ecclesiae* and not as a polemical sectarian. Hence, there is an ecumenical orientation to this volume which tends to emphasize not only Luther's stance on, say,

Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings, *edited by Timothy F. Lull, Fortress, $19.95, 752 pp.*

faith and justification but also writings on ecclesiology, sacramental theology, and pastoral issues. One finds in this volume both standard selections ("The Ninety Five Theses"; *The Freedom of the Christian*) and unexpected gems like Luther's touching *Little Catechism*, and generous servings of his occasional writings. Above all, even in translation, there is Luther's unmistakable voice: blunt, passionate, and full of love for God and his revelation in Christ. Luther was not a systematic theologian but an occasional one; he wrote in response to need. The reader, then, can read unsystematically in this volume. I did just that and found much pleasure. Even so, many more people will find this a useful book for college or seminary courses because of the range of texts offered. It stands as a good alternative to the serviceable anthology of John Dillenberger, which is now more than a generation old. The publisher should also be thanked for setting a reasonable price on such a hefty book.

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *is professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. His most recent book, from Crossroad, is* Catholic Prayer.

The Lutheran emphasis on the Word produced a vigorous theological tradition in the German-speaking world. Among the great giants of this tradition was the historical theologian Adolph Von Harnack (1851-1930), whose reputation rests on the dual accomplishments of his erudite scholarship in matters historical and his passionate espousal of that form of liberal theology which came to be known as *Kulturprotestantismus*. The latter accomplishment served as a position against which his illustrious students, preeminently Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth, could react. Harnack had an enormous impact which still has its place in the world of scholarship.

Rumscheidt's volume, part of the series "The Making of Modern Theology," gives us a good introduction to Harnack's life

Adolph Von Harnack: Liberal Theology at Its Height, *edited by Martin Rumscheidt, Collins Religious Publications, $19.95, 329 pp.*

and thought as well as a generous selection of his great torrent of writing. Throughout the selections Rumscheidt intersperses excerpts from Harnack's classic, *What is Christianity?*, and provides essays on historical methods as well as some evidences of his historical writing. Some of Harnack's observations shed light on contemporary problems. His analysis, for instance, of the Roman Catholic church's cultural relationship to the Roman Empire (Harnack believes that the former replaced the latter) makes for interesting reading in the light of Karl Rahner's suggestion that the Second Vatican Council marked a sea change away from those cultural roots toward a "World Church" (*Weltkirche*) less in debt to its Roman cultural past. Likewise, Harnack's intervention into the issue of historical creeds (he thought the church should compose new ones) is not irrelevant to contemporary discussions about the status of creeds. If I had a criticism of this useful volume it would be to lament the confusing citation apparatus in the introductory essay and headnotes, as well as the pathetically inadequate index. Since these books will undoubtedly find classroom use, there ought to be standards set for the apparatus to make the books "user friendly."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-45), who died at the hands of the Nazis just weeks before the end of the war, has been well served by biographers, thanks to the authoritative study of his intimate friend Eberhard Bethge published in 1970 and the earlier (1968) life by Mary Bosanquet.

The Shame and the Sacrifice: The Life and Martydom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *by Edwin Robertson, Collins Religious Publications, $7.95 paper, 288 pp.*

Nonetheless, it was a moving experience to read this short recent biography by Edwin Robertson who has been so closely identified with the English corpus of Bonhoeffer's writings. Bonhoeffer stands as an exemplary person not only because of the moral quality of his life (but surely for that reason) but because he was a model of what a theologian in the church ought to be. Robertson points out repeatedly the concern that Bonhoeffer had for the church of his birth as well as for the larger life of the entire Christian church. He was deeply Lutheran in his background and in his learning, but he was also a pioneer explorer of the Catholic tradition. Above all, he was a person of great faith who was nourished on the Bible. I have always loved his observation that the relationship of faith to the complexity of life may be seen in an analogy with polyphonic music: the *cantus fir-*

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ogy with polyphonic music: the *cantus firmus* (i.e., the "bottom line") is the love of God and the other voices are all of the intricate interweavings of life as we lead it individually and socially.

Robertson's biography does not provide the finely observed detail of Bethge's work, but it is a readable and succinct first entry into Bonhoeffer's life. The author cites, with judicious brevity, from enough of Bonhoeffer's writings and sermons to make this reviewer want to go back and reread those writings. It would not be *The Letters and Papers from Prison*, once almost talismanic in theological circles, that strikes me as worth a first second look. I want to work through *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*, works written when Bonhoeffer maintained the seminary-in-exile in 1937 at Finkenwalde. It is in those books where the great themes of biblical contemplation, pastoral concerns, and prophetic witness came together in a time of great crisis. Readers may be interested to know that the general editor (John De Gruchy) of "The Making of Modern Theology" series also has a Bonhoeffer volume: *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ* (1978).

Clifford Green's volume on Karl Barth, in the same series as the Harnack and Bonhoeffer volumes noted above, undertakes to do the near impossible: excerpt from the mountain of Barthiana a representative sample of the great theologian's

Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom, *edited by Clifford Green, Collins Religious Publications, $19.95, 348 pp.*

work. Green gives us a fair taste of what Barth was about. There is the languid (1968; the year of his death) essay entitled "Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher," which is a kind of intellectual autobiography, as well as the 1956 *retractio* under the title "The Humanity of God." The volume has the still powerful Barmen Declaration against the Nazi coption of the church hammered out by Barth while he was, as he later said, "fortified by strong coffee and some good Brazil cigars," as well as selections from his study of Anselm and selected sections of the monumental *Church Dogmatics*.

Barth is not à la mode today but it would be churlish to dismiss his writings out of hand as some are wont to do. There is a kind of sonorous majesty to his prose (he may have loved Mozart but he always sounds Bachian to me) heightened by his unflagging emphasis on the godliness of God and the centrality of Christ. What keeps that tone from being pompous is his own good humor and self-deprecating wit. In his own copy of the *Romerbrief*, Green tells us, Barth jotted down a quote from Luther advising a writer who thinks he is great to touch his own ears and, in so doing, he will find that he has a "splendid pair of big, long, shaggy, asses' ears."

Much of Barth's writing derived from his position as a university theologian, but his work never had a purely academic tone to it. Barth saw himself as a theologian of the church (he preached regularly at the city jail in Basel) and for the larger world. His political convictions were socialistic. He strongly resisted national socialism just as he lamented the superpower struggle of the cold war era with its ominous threat of nuclear destruction. Reading some of Barth's writing from this period (Green supplies a generous dollop) does lead one to believe that his socialist instincts led him to a naive evenhandedness of East/West issues that woefully underestimated the horror that was Stalinism, even if one viscerally accepts the theological rectitude of his antinuclear strictures.

This column has concentrated on the German theological tradition, but it is not out of place to mention Thomas Aquinas here: his family, after all, had Hohenstaufen connections and his own teacher was the famous Cologne master, Albert the Great. Besides, I like reading Aquinas.

Timothy McDermott has telescoped the *Summa* into a single volume by eliminating the objections and their answers from each

Summa Theologiae: A Concise Translation, *edited by Timothy McDermott, Christian Classics, $78, 651 pp.*

article in Aquinas and editing the heart of the response into a running series of paragraphs. I checked some of his translations against the Latin and found them accurate enough, but it is clear that McDermott edited heavily even in the running text that is supplied. All scriptural and other quotations are in italics but the references are relegated, irritatingly, to the

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back of the book. The merit of McDermott's version is that one can read the *Summa* as a continuous whole in a translated style that is more accessible to the untrained reader than, say, the more literal and complete Blackfriars translation. There is a great deal more here than Walter Farrell's old pocket version of the *Summa* but, obviously, less than what one finds in the corpus. It would be ungracious not to pay tribute to the labor that went into the making of this book.

The main objection (apart from its staggering cost) is that one is not reading Aquinas, but a version of Aquinas filtered through the sensibility of one person. One misses the push and pull of Aquinas's dialectical mind at work just as one misses the force of the objections (which may, at times, be ornamental but elsewhere really tell us what the argument is all about) with which he begins each article. The net result of this compression is that the *Summa* becomes a quick read, but the character of the work gets lost.

Liberation theology is now nearly a generation old for the English-speaking world which first encountered it through Gustavo Gutierrez's path-breaking *A Theology of Liberation* (1973), a book that reflected a decade of theological work south of the border. The reception of this theology makes a fascinating study in its own right since it managed to provoke everything from wild adulation to outright hostility. That this reaction is not academic is, unhappily, proved by recent events in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central and Latin America. Here in the U.S. there were (and are) enthusiastic variants of its methodologies employed by native Americans, women, blacks, and Chicanos while the conservative right viewed it with fear and loathing. Those same ambivalences come from the Vatican where we have watched papal approbation of some of its ideas as well as curial misgivings about others.

Arthur McGovern's book is an exemplary survey of the state of the question today. Not to put too fine a point on it: McGovern is favorably disposed to liberationist theologies while cognizant of their shortcomings, both social and theological. He rebuts the common criticism that liberation theology is reheated Marxism, deficient in any sense of the transcendent. His treatment of critics like Michael Novak is balanced, but tough on people who haven't done their homework, like the polemicist Richard Neuhaus. McGovern's most conspicuous merits are his comprehensive reading in the sources and grasp of political philosophy. The former allows him to outline the divergent strands of the liberationist movement and the latter permits him to see both the value and the pitfalls of its social analysis.

Liberation Theology and Its Critics: Towards an Assessment, *by Arthur F. McGovern, S.J., Orbis, $14.95, 281 pp.*

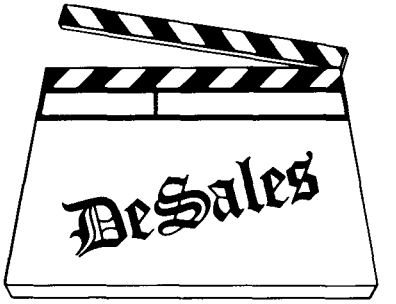
My own reaction to liberation theology is mixed. What I do like very much is its insistence on a spirituality (there is much good spiritual writing coming from these authors today) which is rooted in actual experience and its drumbeat insistence that we as North Americans approach our classics from a somewhat privileged position. Liberation theologians like Gutierrez and Galilea have helped me read the Scriptures in a more sapiential manner. What McGovern has done—and for this I am equally grateful—is to help me see that my ambivalences (about their teutonic approach to social theory for instance) reflect a different intellectual background and a different cultural disposition. Readers of *Commonweal* have received a sample of McGovern's book (November 3, 1989), but the whole deserves a reading for its comprehensive overview of a move-

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 34)

I wish a more substantive treatment could have been included.

In their pastoral letter on the economy a few years back the U.S. bishops made reference to the major environmental problems we are facing as we recklessly use up natural resources in our quest for ever



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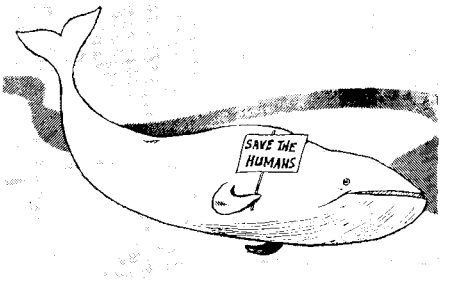

increasing profits and consumer goods. They said that all people face the "challenge to develop a new ecological ethic which will help shape a future that is both just and sustainable."

I wonder how prepared we Catholics are to jump into the fray and to contribute to efforts to meet this challenge. What is our understanding of such issues as toxic waste disposal, energy conservation, and tropical deforestation? What do Catholic leaders have to say about global warming, endangered species, or off-shore drillings?

In the economics pastoral, the bishops admit that "Catholic social teaching on the care of the environment and the management of natural resources is still in the process of development." As a Catholic who works in the environmental community, I am heartened by this, although I have seen very little evidence of this process. Perhaps we will soon have a pastoral on nature and stewardship, as Mr. Reilly suggests.

In the meantime, I hope that more attention will be given to environmental issues in the Catholic press and in the pulpit. Perhaps *Commonweal* can help lead the way in the next ten years and devote more of its own pages to the environment.

CLAIRE E. RUSOWICZ

Your wish is our command. See "The Sacrament of Creation," pp. 42-49.

THE EDITORS

Jerome & Origen

Berlin, N.Y.

To the Editors: One might be lulled by the fastidiousness of Lawrence Cunningham in his recent "Religious Booknotes" [October 20, 1989], so a few clarifications are in order. First, Origen's Hexapla contained the entire Old Testament not "in six different Greek versions in parallel columns" but rather in six columns made up of the original Hebrew, the Hebrew

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transliterated into Greek characters, the Septuagint (with corrections indicated by Origen), and three post-Christian Greek translations. Professor Cunningham further suggests that St. Jerome was unfamiliar with the Hexapla and implies that the reason was that it existed in only one copy. But in fact, St. Jerome claims to have made thorough use of that original at Caesarea (Comm. on Titus 3, 9) and indeed to have gone back through it a second time (Comm. on Ps. 1).

WILLIAM M. KLIMON

The author replies:

Mr. Klimon is correct in both instances. I meant to say "six versions"not "six Greek versions." He may be consoled that I got it right when I chalked them up on the board for my students this term. As to the second point: my emphasis may have misled. Jerome knew the Hexapla; he simply did not list it as such in *Letter #33 to Paula* where he provides an exhaustive litany of Origen's work. It was the enormousness of that list which I wished to emphasize. I thank Mr. Klimon for the clarification.

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM

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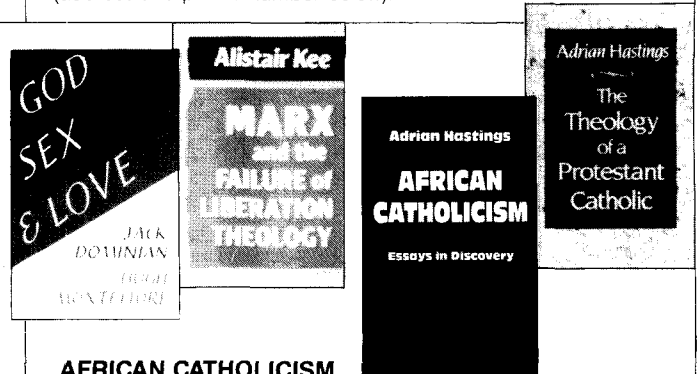

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